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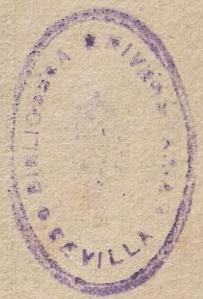
















Donaldson pinxit.

Ravenet sculpsit.



ESSAYS  
AND  
TREATISES  
ON  
SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By DAVID HUME, Esq.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING  
ESSAYS, MORAL, POLITICAL, and LITERARY.

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A NEW EDITION.

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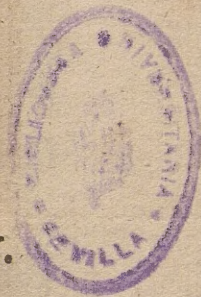
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THE  
C O N T E N T S  
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FIRST VOLUME.

ESSAYS, MORAL, POLITICAL, and LITERARY.

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## ESSAYS



ESSAYS,  
MORAL, POLITICAL,  
AND  
LITERARY.  
PART I.\*

\* First Printed in 1742.

VOL. I. B







## E S S A Y I.

## OF THE DELICACY OF TASTE AND PASSION.

SOME People are subject to a certain *delicacy* of *passion*, which makes them extremely sensible to all the accidents of life, and gives them a lively joy upon every prosperous event, as well as a piercing grief, when they meet with misfortunes and adversity. Favours and good offices easily engage their friendship; while the smallest injury provokes their resentment. Any honour or mark of distinction elevates them above measure; but they are as sensibly touched with contempt. People of this character have, no doubt, much more lively enjoyments, as well as more pungent sorrows, than men of cool and sedate tempers: But, I believe, when every thing is balanced, there is no one, who would not rather chuse to be of the latter character, were he entirely master of his own disposition. Good or ill fortune is very little at our own disposal: And when a person, that has this sensibility of temper, meets with any misfortune, his sorrow or resentment takes entire possession of him, and deprives him of all relish in the common occurrences of life; the right enjoyment of which forms the greatest part of our happiness. Great pleasures are much less frequent than great pains; so that a sensible temper must meet with fewer trials in the former way than in the latter. Not to mention,



that men of such lively passions are apt to be transported beyond all bounds of prudence and discretion, and to take false steps in the conduct of life, which are often irretrievable.

There is a *delicacy* of *taste* observable in some men, which very much resembles this *delicacy* of *passion*, and produces the same sensibility to beauty and deformity of every kind, as that does to prosperity and adversity, obligations and injuries. When you present a poem or a picture to a man possessed of this talent, the delicacy of his feeling, makes him be touched very sensibly with every part of it; nor are the masterly strokes perceived with more exquisite relish and satisfaction, than the negligences or absurdities with disgust and uneasiness. A polite and judicious conversation affords him the highest entertainment; rudeness or impertinence is as great a punishment to him. In short, delicacy of taste has the same effect as delicacy of passion: It enlarges the sphere both of our happiness and misery, and makes us sensible to pains as well as pleasures, which escape the rest of mankind.

I believe, however, there is no one, who will not agree with me, that notwithstanding this resemblance, a delicacy of taste is as much to be desired and cultivated as a delicacy of passion is to be lamented, and to be remedied, if possible. The good or ill accidents of life are very little at our own disposal; but it is much in our power what books we shall read, what diversions we shall partake of, and what company we shall keep. Philosophers have endeavoured to render happiness entirely independent of every thing external. That is impossible to be attained: But every wise man will endeavour to place his happiness on such objects as depend most upon himself: and that is not to be attained so much by any other means as by this delicacy  
of



of sentiment. When a man is possessed of that talent, he is more happy by what pleases his taste, than by what gratifies his appetites, and receives more enjoyment from a poem or a piece of reasoning than the most expensive luxury can afford.

How far delicacy of taste, and that of passion, are connected together in the original frame of the mind, it is hard to determine. To me there appears a very considerable connexion between them. For we may observe that women, who have more delicate passions than men, have also a more delicate taste of the ornaments of life, of dress, equipage, and the ordinary decencies of behaviour. Any excellency in these hits their taste much sooner than ours; and when you please their taste, you soon engage their affections.

But whatever connexion there may be originally between these dispositions, I am persuaded, that nothing is so proper to cure us of this delicacy of passion, as the cultivating of that higher and more refined taste, which enables us to judge of the characters of men, of compositions of genius, and of the productions of the nobler arts. A greater or less relish of those obvious beauties which strike the senses, depends entirely upon the greater or less sensibility of the temper: But with regard to the sciences and liberal arts, a fine taste is, in some measure, the same with strong sense, or at least depends so much upon it, that they are inseparable. To judge aright of a composition of genius, there are so many views to be taken in, so many circumstances to be compared, and such a knowledge of human nature requisite, that no man, who is not possessed of the soundest judgment, will ever make a tolerable critic in such performances. And this is an additional reason for cultivating a relish in the liberal arts. Our judgment will strengthen by this exercise:



cise: We shall form juster notions of life: Many things, which please or afflict others, will appear to us too frivolous to engage our attention: And we shall lose by degrees that sensibility and delicacy of passion, which is so incommodious.

But perhaps I have gone too far in saying, That a cultivated taste for the polite arts extinguishes the passions, and renders us indifferent to those objects which are so fondly pursued by the rest of mankind. On farther reflection, I find, that it rather improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions; at the same time that it renders the mind incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions.

~~*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,*~~  
*Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.*

For this, I think there may be assigned two very natural reasons. In the *first* place, nothing is so improving to the temper as the study of the beauties, either of poetry, eloquence, music, or painting. They give a certain elegance of sentiment, to which the rest of mankind are absolute strangers. The emotions they excite are soft and tender. They draw off the mind from the hurry of business and interest; cherish reflection; dispose to tranquillity; and produce an agreeable melancholy, which, of all dispositions of the mind, is the best suited to love and friendship.

In the *second* place, a delicacy of taste is favourable to love and friendship, by confining our choice to few people, and making us indifferent to the company and conversation of the greatest part of men. You will very seldom find, that mere men of the world, whatever strong sense they may be endowed with, are very nice in distinguishing characters, or in marking  
2 those



those insensible differences and gradations which make one man preferable to another. Any one, that has competent sense, is sufficient for their entertainment: They talk to him, of their pleasures and affairs, with the same frankness as they would to another; and finding many, who are fit to supply his place, they never feel any vacancy or want in his absence. But to make use of the allusion of a celebrated \* FRENCH author, the judgment may be compared to a clock or watch, where the most ordinary machine is sufficient to mark the hours; but the most elaborate and artificial alone can point out the minutes and seconds, and distinguish the smallest differences of time. One that has well digested his knowledge both of books and men, has little enjoyment but in the company of a few select companions. He feels too sensibly, how much all the rest of mankind fall short of the notions which he has entertained. And, his affections being thus confined within a narrow circle, no wonder he carries them further than if they were more general and undistinguished. The gaiety and frolic of a bottle companion improves with him into a solid friendship: And the ardours of a youthful appetite become an elegant passion.

\* *Monf. FONTENELLE, Pluralité des Mondes. Soir 6.*



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## E S S A Y II.

### OF THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

NOTHING is more apt to surprize a foreigner, than the extreme liberty, which we enjoy in this country, of communicating whatever we please to the public, and of openly censuring every measure, adopted by the king or his ministers. If the administration resolve upon war, it is affirmed, that either wilfully or ignorantly they mistake the interest of the nation, and that peace, in the present situation of affairs, is infinitely preferable. If the passion of the ministers lean towards peace, our political writers breathe nothing but war and devastation, and represent the pacific conduct of the government as mean and pusillanimous. As this liberty is not indulged in any other government, either republican or monarchical; in HOLLAND and VENICE, no more than in FRANCE or SPAIN; it may very naturally give rise to these two questions, *How it happens that GREAT BRITAIN enjoys such a peculiar privilege?* and *Whether the unlimited exercise of this liberty be advantageous or prejudicial to the public?*

As to the first question, Why the laws indulge us in such an extraordinary liberty? I believe the reason may be derived from our mixed form of government, which is neither wholly monarchical, nor wholly republican. It will be found, if I  
mistake



mistake not, a true observation in politics, that the two extremes in government, liberty and slavery, commonly approach nearest to each other; and that as you depart from the extremes, and mix a little of monarchy with liberty, the government becomes always the more free; and on the other hand, when you mix a little of liberty with monarchy, the yoke becomes always the more grievous and intolerable. I shall endeavour to explain myself. In a government, such as that of FRANCE, which is entirely absolute, and where laws, custom, and religion concur, all of them, to make the people fully satisfied with their condition, the monarch cannot entertain the least *jealousy* against his subjects, and therefore is apt to indulge them in great *liberties* both of speech and action. In a government altogether republican, such as that of HOLLAND, where there is no magistrate so eminent as to give *jealousy* to the state, there is no danger in intrusting the magistrates with very large discretionary powers; and though many advantages result from such powers, in the preserving peace and order, yet they lay a considerable restraint on men's actions, and make every private subject pay a great respect to the government. Thus it seems evident, that the two extremes of absolute monarchy and of a republic, approach very near to each other in some material circumstances. In the *first*, the magistrate has no jealousy of the people: In the *second*, the people have no jealousy of the magistrate: Which want of jealousy begets a mutual confidence and trust in both cases, and produces a species of liberty in monarchies, and of arbitrary power in republics.

To justify the other part of the foregoing observation, that in every government the means are most wide of each other, and that the mixtures of monarchy and liberty render the yoke



either more easy or more grievous; I must cite a remark of TACITUS with regard to the ROMANS under the emperors, that they neither could bear total slavery nor total liberty, *Nec totam servitutem, nec totam libertatem pati possunt*. This remark a celebrated poet has translated and applied to the ENGLISH, in his lively description of queen ELIZABETH'S policy and government.

*Et fit aimer son joug a l'Anglois indompté,  
Qui ne peut ni servir, ni vivre en liberté.*

HENRIADE, Liv. I.

According to these remarks, we are to consider the ROMAN government under the emperors as a mixture of despotism and liberty, where the despotism prevailed; and the ENGLISH government as a mixture of the same kind, but where the liberty predominates. The consequences are exactly conformable to the foregoing observation; and such as may be expected from those mixed forms of government, which beget a mutual watchfulness and jealousy. The ROMAN emperors were, many of them, the most frightful tyrants that ever disgraced human nature; and it is evident that their cruelty was chiefly excited by their *jealousy*, and by their observing that all the great men of ROME bore with impatience the dominion of a family, which, but a little before, was no wise superior to their own. On the other hand, as the republican part of the government prevails in ENGLAND, though with a great mixture of monarchy, 'tis obliged, for its own preservation, to maintain a watchful *jealousy* over the magistrates, to remove all discretionary powers, and to secure every one's life and fortune by general and inflexible laws. No action must be deemed a crime but what the law has plainly determined to be such: No crime must



must be imputed to a man but from a legal proof before his judges ; and even these judges must be his fellow-subjects, who are engaged, by their own interest, to have a watchful eye over the encroachments and violence of the ministers. From these causes it proceeds, that there is as much liberty, and even, perhaps, licentiousness in BRITAIN, as there were formerly slavery and tyranny in ROME.

These principles account for the great liberty of the press in these kingdoms, beyond what is indulged in any other government. 'Tis sufficiently known, that arbitrary power would steal in upon us, were we not extremely watchful to prevent its progress, and were there not an easy method of conveying the alarm from one end of the kingdom to the other. The spirit of the people must frequently be roused in order to curb the ambition of the court ; and the dread of rousing this spirit, must be employed to prevent that ambition. Nothing so effectual to this purpose as the liberty of the press, by which all the learning, wit and genius of the nation may be employed on the side of freedom, and every one be animated to its defence. As long, therefore, as the republican part of our government can maintain itself against the monarchical, it must be extremely careful of preserving the press open, as of the utmost importance to its own preservation.

Since therefore that liberty is so essential to the support of our mixed government ; this sufficiently decides the second question, *Whether such a liberty be advantageous or prejudicial ;* there being nothing of greater importance in every state than the preservation of the ancient government, especially if it be a free one. But I would fain go a step farther, and assert, that



this liberty is attended with so few inconveniencies, that it may be claimed as the common right of mankind, and ought to be indulged them in every species of government; except the ecclesiastical, to which indeed it would prove fatal. We need not dread from this liberty any such ill consequences as followed from the harangues of the popular demagogues of ATHENS and tribunes of ROME. A man reads a book or pamphlet coolly and alone. There is none present from whom he can catch the passion by contagion. He is not hurried away by the force and energy of action. And should he be wrought up to ever so seditious a humour, there is no violent resolution presented to him, by which he can immediately vent his passion. The liberty of the press, therefore, however abused, can scarce ever excite popular tumults or rebellion. And as to those murmurs or secret discontents it may occasion, 'tis better they should get vent in words, that they may come to the knowledge of the magistrate before it be too late, in order to his providing a remedy against them. Mankind, it is true, have always a greater propension to believe what is said to the disadvantage of their governors, than the contrary; but this inclination is inseparable from them, whether they have liberty or not. A whisper may fly as quick, and be as pernicious as a pamphlet. Nay, it will be more pernicious, where men are not accustomed to think freely, or distinguish between truth and falsehood.

It has also been found, as the experience of mankind increases, that the *people* are no such dangerous monster as they have been represented, and that it is in every respect better to guide them, like rational creatures, than to lead or drive them, like brute beasts. Before the United Provinces set the example, toleration

was



was deemed incompatible with good government; and it was thought impossible, that a number of religious sects could live together in harmony and peace, and preserve an equal affection to their common country, and to each other. ENGLAND has set a like example of civil liberty; and though this liberty seems to occasion some small ferment at present, it has not as yet produced any pernicious effects; and it is to be hoped, that men, being every day more accustomed to the free discussion of public affairs, will improve in their judgment of them, and be with greater difficulty seduced by every idle rumour and popular clamour.

It is a very comfortable reflection to the lovers of liberty, that this peculiar privilege of BRITAIN is of a kind that cannot easily be wrested from us, but must last as long as our government remains, in any degree, free and independent. It is seldom, that liberty of any kind is lost all at once. Slavery has so frightful an aspect to men accustomed to freedom, that it must steal upon them by degrees, and must disguise itself in a thousand shapes, in order to be received. But, if the liberty of the press ever be lost, it must be lost at once. The general laws against sedition and libelling are at present as strong as they possibly can be made. Nothing can impose a farther restraint, but either the clapping an IMPRIMATUR upon the press, or the giving to the court very large discretionary powers to punish whatever displeases them. But these concessions would be such a bare-faced violation of liberty, that they will probably be the last efforts of a despotic government. We may conclude, that the liberty of *Britain* is gone for ever when these attempts shall succeed.



# ESSAY III.

## THAT POLITICS MAY BE REDUCED TO A SCIENCE.

**I**T is a question with many, Whether there be any essential difference between one form of government and another? and, whether every form may not become good or bad, according as it is well or ill administered\*? Were it once admitted, that all governments are alike, and that the only difference consists in the character and conduct of the governors, most political disputes would be at an end, and all *Zeal* for one constitution above another, may justly be esteemed mere bigotry and folly. But, though a friend to Moderation, I cannot forbear condemning this sentiment, and should be sorry to think, that human affairs admit of no greater stability, than what they receive from the casual humours and characters of particular men.

'Tis true, those who maintain, that the goodness of all government consists in the goodness of the administration, may cite many particular instances in history, where the very same government, in different hands, has varied suddenly into the two opposite extremes of good and bad. Compare the FRENCH

\* For forms of government let fools contest;  
Whate'er is best administer'd is best.



government under HENRY III. and under HENRY IV. Oppression, levity, artifice on the part of the rulers; faction, sedition, treachery, disloyalty, rebellion, on the part of the subjects: These compose the character of the former miserable æra. But when the patriot and heroic prince, who succeeded, was once firmly seated on the throne, the government, the people, every thing seemed to be totally changed; and all from the difference of the temper and sentiments of these two sovereigns. An equal difference of a contrary kind, may be found on comparing the reigns of ELIZABETH and JAMES, at least with regard to foreign affairs: and instances of this kind may be multiplied, almost without number, from ancient as well as modern history.

But here I would beg leave to make a distinction. All absolute governments (and such, in a great measure, was that of ENGLAND, till the middle of the last century, notwithstanding the numerous panegyrics on ancient ENGLISH liberty) must very much depend on the administration; and this is one of the great inconveniencies of that form of government. But a republican and free government would be a most obvious absurdity, if the particular checks and controuls, provided by the constitution, had really no influence, and made it not the interest, even of bad men, to operate for the public good. Such is the intention of these forms of government, and such is their real effect, where they are wisely constituted: As, on the other hand, they are the sources of all disorder, and of the blackest crimes, where either skill or honesty has been wanting in their original frame and institution.

So great is the force of laws, and of particular forms of government, and so little dependence have they on the humours  
and



and tempers of men, that consequences almost as general and certain may be deduced from them, on most occasions, as any which the mathematical sciences afford us.

The ROMAN government gave the whole legislative power to the commons, without allowing a negative either to the nobility or consuls. This unbounded power the commons possessed in a collective, not in a representative body. The consequences were: When the people, by success and conquest, had become very numerous, and had spread themselves to a great distance from the capital, the city-tribes, though the most contemptible, carried almost every vote: They were, therefore, most cajoled by every one who affected popularity: They were supported in idleness by general distributions of corn, and by particular bribes, which they received from almost every candidate: By this means they became every day more licentious, and the CAMPUS MARTIUS was a perpetual scene of tumult and sedition: Armed slaves were introduced among these degenerate citizens; so that the whole government fell into anarchy, and the greatest happiness which the ROMANS could then hope for, was the despotic power of the CÆSARS. Such are the effects of democracy without a representative.

A Nobility may possess the whole, or any part of the legislative power of a state, in two different ways. Either every nobleman shares the power as part of the whole body, or the whole body enjoys the power as composed of parts, which have each a distinct power and authority. The VENETIAN aristocracy is an instance of the first kind of government: The POLISH of the second. In the VENETIAN government the whole body of nobility possesses the whole power, and no nobleman has any authority which he receives not from the whole.

In



In the POLISH government every nobleman, by means of his fiefs, has a peculiar hereditary authority over his vassals, and the whole body has no authority but what it receives from the concurrence of its parts. The distinct operations and tendencies of these two species of government might be made most apparent even *a priori*. A VENETIAN nobility is infinitely preferable to a POLISH, let the humours and education of men be ever so much varied. A nobility, who possess their power in common, will preserve peace and order, both among themselves and their subjects; and no member can have authority enough to controul the laws for a moment. The nobles will preserve their authority over the people, but without any grievous tyranny, or any invasion of private property; because such a tyrannical government promotes not the interest of the whole body, however it may that of some individuals. There will be a distinction of rank between the nobility and people, but this will be the only distinction in the state. The whole nobility will form one body, and the whole people another, without any of those private feuds and animosities, which spread ruin and desolation every where. 'Tis easy to see the disadvantages of a POLISH nobility in every one of these particulars.

'Tis possible so to constitute a free government, as that a single person, call him doge, prince, or king, shall possess a very large share of power, and shall form a proper balance or counterpoise to the other parts of the legislature. This chief magistrate may be either *elective* or *hereditary*; and though the former institution may, to a superficial view, appear the most advantageous; yet a more accurate inspection will discover in it greater inconveniencies than in the latter, and such as are founded on causes and principles eternal and immutable. The



filling of the throne, in such a government, is a point of too great and too general interest, not to divide the whole people into factions: From whence a civil war, the greatest of ills, may be apprehended, almost with certainty, upon every vacancy. The prince elected must be either a *Foreigner* or a *Native*: The former will be ignorant of the people whom he is to govern; suspicious of his new subjects, and suspected by them; giving his confidence entirely to strangers, who will have no other care but of enriching themselves in the quickest manner, while their master's favour and authority are able to support them. A native will carry into the throne all his private animosities and friendships, and will never be regarded, in his elevation, without exciting the sentiments of envy in those, who formerly considered him as their equal. Not to mention, that a crown is too high a reward ever to be given to merit alone, and will always induce the candidates to employ force, or money, or intrigue, and every sinister method to procure the votes of the electors: So that such an election will give no better chance for superior merit in the prince, than if the state had trusted to birth alone for determining their sovereign.

It may therefore be pronounced as an universal axiom in politics, *That an hereditary prince, a nobility without vassals, and a people voting by their representatives, form the best* MONARCHY, ARISTOCRACY, *and* DEMOCRACY. But in order to prove more fully, that politics admit of general truths, which are invariable by the humor or education either of subject or sovereign, it may not be amiss to observe some other principles of this science, which may seem to deserve that character.

It may easily be observed, that though free governments have been commonly the most happy for those who partake of their freedom;



freedom; yet are they the most ruinous and oppressive to their provinces: And this observation may, I believe, be fixed as a maxim of the kind we are here speaking of. When a monarch extends his dominions by conquest, he soon learns to consider his old and his new subjects as on the same footing; because, in reality, all his subjects are to him the same, except the few friends and favourites, with whom he is personally acquainted. He does not, therefore, make any distinction between them in his *general* laws; and, at the same time, is no less careful to prevent all *particular* acts of oppression on the one as on the other. But a free state necessarily makes a great distinction and must always do so, till men learn to love their neighbours as well as themselves. The conquerors, in such a government, are all legislators, and will be sure so to contrive matters, by restrictions of trade, and by taxes, as to draw some private, as well as public, advantage from their conquests. Provincial governors have also a better chance in a republic, to escape with their plunder, by means of bribery or interest; and their fellow-citizens, who find their own state to be enriched by the spoils of the subject-provinces, will be the more inclined to tolerate such abuses. Not to mention, that it is a necessary precaution in a free state to change the governors frequently; which obliges these temporary tyrants to be more expeditious and rapacious, that they may accumulate sufficient wealth before they give place to their successors. What cruel tyrants were the ROMANS over the world during the time of their commonwealth! 'Tis true, they had laws to prevent oppression in their provincial magistrates; but CICERO informs us, that the ROMANS could not better consult the interest of the provinces than by repealing these very laws. For in that case, says he, our

D 2

magistrates,



magistrates, having intire impunity, would plunder no more than would satisfy their own rapaciousness; whereas, at present, they must also satisfy that of their judges, and of all the great men of ROME, whose protection they stand in need of. Who can read of the cruelties and oppressions of VERRES without horror and astonishment? And who is not touched with indignation to hear, that after CICERO had exhausted on that abandoned criminal all the thunders of his eloquence, and had prevailed so far as to get him condemned to the utmost extent of the laws; yet that cruel tyrant lived peaceably to old age, in opulence and ease, and, thirty years afterward, was put into the proscription of MARK ANTHONY, on account of his exorbitant wealth, where he fell, with CICERO himself, and all the most virtuous men of ROME? After the dissolution of the commonwealth, the ROMAN yoke became easier to the provinces, as TACITUS informs us\*; and it may be observed, that even some of the worst emperors, DOMITIAN†, for instance, were very careful to prevent all oppression of the provinces. In ‡ TIBERIUS's time, GAUL was esteemed richer than ITALY itself: Nor, do I find, during the whole time of the ROMAN monarchy, that the empire became less rich or populous in any of its provinces; though indeed its valour and military discipline were always upon the decline. The oppression and tyranny of the CARTHAGINIANS over their subject states in AFRICA went so far, as we learn from POLYBIUS§, that not content with exacting the half of all the produce of

\* Ann. lib. 1. cap. 2.

† SUET. in vita DOMIT.

‡ *Egregium resumendæ libertati tempus, si ipsi florentes, quam inops, ITALIA, quam imbellis urbana plebs, nihil validum in exercitibus, nisi quod externum cogitarent.* TACIT. Ann. lib. 3.

§. Lib. 1. cap. 72.



the ground, which of itself was a very high rent, they also loaded them with many other taxes. If we pass from antient to modern times, we shall always find the observation to hold. The provinces of absolute monarchies are always better treated than those of free states. Compare the *Pâis conquis* of FRANCE with IRELAND, and you will be convinced of this truth; tho' this latter kingdom being, in a good measure peopled from ENGLAND, possesses so many rights and privileges as should naturally make it challenge better treatment than that of a conquered province. CORSICA is also an obvious instance to the same purpose.

There is an observation of MACHIAVEL, with regard to the conquests of ALEXANDER the Great, which, I think, may be regarded as one of those eternal political truths which no time nor accidents can vary. It may seem strange, says that politician, that such sudden conquests, as those of ALEXANDER, should be settled so peaceably by his successors, and that the PERSIANS, during all the confusions and civil wars of the GREEKS, never made the smallest effort towards the recovery of their former independent government. To satisfy us concerning the cause of this remarkable event, we may consider, that a monarch may govern his subjects in two different ways. He may either follow the maxims of the eastern princes, and stretch his power so far as to leave no distinction of ranks among his subjects, but what proceeds immediately from himself; no advantages of birth; no hereditary honours and possessions; and, in a word, no credit among the people, except from his commission alone. Or a monarch may exert his power after a milder manner, like our EUROPEAN princes; and leave other sources of honour, beside his smile and favour: Birth, titles, posses-



sions, valour, integrity, knowlege, or great and fortunate achievements. In the former species of government, after a conquest, it is impossible ever to shake off the yoke; since no one possesses, among the people, so much personal credit and authority as to begin such an enterprize: Whereas, in the latter, the least misfortune, or discord of the victors, will encourage the vanquished to take arms, who have leaders ready to prompt and conduct them in every undertaking\*.

Such

\* I have taken it for granted, according to the supposition of MACHIAVEL, that the ancient PERSIANS had no nobility; though there is reason to suspect, that the FLORENTINE secretary, who seems to have been better acquainted with the ROMAN than the GREEK authors, was mistaken in this particular. The more ancient PERSIANS, whose manners are described by XENOPHON, were a free people, and had nobility. Their *εποταμοι* were preserved even after the extending of their conquests and the consequent change of their government. ARRIAN mentions them in DARIUS's time, *De exped. ALEX.* lib. 2. Historians also speak often of the persons in command as men of family. TYGRANES, who was general of the MEDES under XERXES, was of the race of ACHMÆNES, HEROD. lib. 7. cap. 62. ARTACHÆAS, who directed the cutting of the canal about mount ATHOS, was of the same family. *Id.* cap. 117. MEGABYSUS was one of the seven eminent PERSIANS who conspired against the MAGI. His son ZOPYRUS, was in the highest command under DARIUS, and delivered BABYLON to him. His grandson, MEGABYSUS, commanded the army, defeated at MARATHON. His great grandson ZOPYRUS, was also eminent, and was banished PERSIA: HEROD. lib. 3. THUC. lib. 1. ROCACES, who commanded an army in Egypt under ARTAXERXES, was also descended from one of the seven conspirators, DION. SIC. lib. 16. AGESILAUS, in XENOPHON, *Hist. GRÆC.* lib. 4. being desirous of making a marriage betwixt king COTYS his ally, and the daughter of SPITHRIDATES, a PERSIAN of rank, who had deserted to him, first asks COTYS what family SPITHRIDATES is of. One of the most considerable in PERSIA, says COTYS. ARIÆUS, when offered the sovereignty by CLEARCHUS and the ten thousand GREEKS, refused it as of too low a rank, and said, that so many eminent PERSIANS would never endure his rule. *Id. de exped.* lib. 2. Some of the families, descended from the seven PERSIANS abovementioned remained during all ALEXANDER's successors; and SPITHRIDATES, in ANTIOCHUS's time, is said by POLYBIUS to be descended from one of them, lib. 5. cap. 43. ARTABASUS was esteemed, as ARRIAN says, *ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις Περσῶν.* lib. 3. And when ALEXANDER married in one day 80 of his captains to

PERSIAN



Such is the reasoning of MACHIAVEL, which seems to me very solid and conclusive; though I wish he had not mixed falsehood with truth, in asserting that monarchies governed according to the eastern policy, though more easily kept when once subdued, yet are the most difficult to subdue; since they cannot contain any powerful subject whose discontent and faction may facilitate the enterprizes of an enemy. For besides, that such a tyrannical government enervates the courage of men, and renders them indifferent towards the fortunes of their sovereign; besides this, I say, we find by experience, that even the temporary and delegated authority of the generals and magistrates; being always, in such governments, as absolute within its sphere, as that of the prince himself; is able, with barbarians accustomed to a blind submission, to produce the most dangerous and fatal revolutions. So that, in every respect, a gentle government is preferable, and gives the greatest security to the sovereign as well as to the subject.

Legislators, therefore, ought not to trust the future government of a state entirely to chance, but ought to provide a system of laws to regulate the administration of public affairs to the latest posterity. Effects will always correspond to causes; and wise regulations in any commonwealth, are the most va-

PERSIAN women, his intention plainly was to ally the MACEDONIANS with the most eminent Persian families. Id. lib. 7. DIODORUS SICULUS says they were of the most noble birth in PERSIA, lib. 17. The government of PERSIA was despotic, and conducted, in many respects, after the eastern manner, but was not carried so far as to extirpate all nobility, and confound all ranks and orders. It left men who were still great, by themselves and their family, independent of their office and commission. And the reason why the MACEDONIANS kept so easily dominion over them was owing to other causes easy to be found in the historians; though it must be owned that MACHIAVEL's reasoning is, in itself, just, however doubtful its application to the present case.

luable



who is only susceptible of friendship, without public spirit, or a regard to the community, is deficient in the most material and most extensive part of virtue.

But this is a subject which needs not be longer insisted on at present. There are enough of zealots on both sides who kindle up the passions of their partizans, and under the pretence of public good, pursue the interests and ends of their particular faction. For my part, I shall always be more fond of promoting moderation than zeal; though perhaps the surest way of producing moderation in every party is to encrease our zeal for the public. Let us therefore try, if it be possible, from the foregoing doctrine, to draw a lesson of moderation with regard to the parties into which our country is at present divided; at the same time, that we allow not this moderation to abate the industry and passion with which every individual is bound to pursue the good of his country.

Those who either attack or defend a minister in such a government as ours, where the utmost liberty is allowed, always carry matters to an extreme, and exaggerate his merit or demerit with regard to the public. His enemies are sure to charge him with the greatest enormities, both in domestic and foreign management; and there is no meanness nor crime, of which, in their account, he is not capable. Unnecessary wars, scandalous treaties, profusion of public treasure, oppressive taxes, every kind of mal-administration is ascribed to him. To aggravate the charge, his pernicious conduct, it is said, will extend its baleful influence even to posterity, by undermining the best constitution in the world, and disordering that wise system of laws, institutions and customs, by which our ancestors, for so  
many



many centuries, have been so happily governed. He is not only a wicked minister in himself, but has removed every security provided against wicked ministers for the future.

On the other hand, the partizans of the minister make his panegyric run as high as the accusation against him, and celebrate his wise, steady and moderate conduct in every part of his administration. The honour and interest of the nation supported abroad, public credit maintained at home, persecution restrained, faction subdued; the merit of all these blessings is ascribed solely to the minister. At the same time he crowns all his other merits, by a religious care of the best constitution in the world, which he has preserved in all its parts, and has transmitted entire, to be the happiness and security of the latest posterity.

When this accusation and panegyric are received by the partizans of each party, no wonder they beget a most extraordinary ferment on both sides, and fill the nation with the most violent animosities. But I would fain persuade these party-zealots, that there is a flat contradiction both in the accusation and panegyric, and that it were impossible for either of them to run so high, were it not for this contradiction. If our constitution be really *that noble fabric, the pride of BRITAIN, the envy of our neighbours, raised by the labour of so many centuries, repaired at the expence of so many millions, and cemented by such a profusion of blood*\*; I say, if our constitution does in any degree deserve these eulogies, it would never have suffered a wicked and weak minister, to govern triumphantly for a course of twenty years, when opposed by the greatest geniuses of the nation,

\* *Dissertation on Parties*, Letter 10.



who exercised the utmost liberty of tongue and pen, in parliament, and in their frequent appeals to the people. But, if the minister be wicked and weak, to the degree so strenuously insisted on, the constitution must be faulty in its original principles, and he cannot consistently be charged with undermining the best constitution in the world. A constitution is only so far good, as it provides a remedy against mal-administration; and if the BRITISH constitution, when in its greatest vigour, and repaired by two such remarkable events, as the *Revolution* and *Accession*, by which our ancient royal family was sacrificed to it; if our constitution, I say, with so great advantages, does not, in fact, provide any such remedy, we are rather beholden to any minister who undermines it, and affords us an opportunity of erecting in its place a better constitution.

I would make use of the same topics to moderate the zeal of those who defend the minister. *Is our constitution so excellent?* Then a change of ministry can be no such dreadful event; since it is essential to such a constitution, in every ministry, both to preserve itself from violation, and to prevent all enormities in the administration. *Is our constitution very bad?* Then so extraordinary a jealousy and apprehension, on account of changes, is ill-placed; and a man should no more be anxious in this case, than a husband, who had married a woman from the stews, should be watchful to prevent her infidelity. Public affairs in such a constitution, must necessarily go to confusion, by whatever hands they are conducted; and the zeal of *patriots* is much less requisite in that case than the patience and submission of *philosophers*. The virtue and good intentions of CATO and BRUTUS are highly laudable; but, to what purpose did their zeal serve? To nothing, but to hasten the fatal period of



of the ROMAN government, and render its convulsions and dying agonies more violent and painful.

I would not be understood to mean, that public affairs deserve no care and attention at all. Would men be moderate and consistent, their claims might be admitted; at least might be examined. The *country-party* might still assert, that our constitution, though excellent, will admit of mal-administration to a certain degree; and therefore, if the minister be bad, it is proper to oppose him with a *suitable* degree of zeal. And, on the other hand, the *court-party* may be allowed, upon the supposition that the minister were good, to defend, with *some* zeal too, his administration. I would only persuade men not to contend, as if they were fighting *pro aris & focis*, and change a good constitution into a bad one, by the violence of their factions.\*.

I have

\* *What our author's opinion was of the famous minister here pointed at, may be learned from that essay, printed in the former editions, under the title of A character of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE: It was as follows: There never was a man, whose actions and character have been more earnestly and openly canvassed, than those of the present minister, who, having governed a learned and free nation for so long a time, amidst such mighty opposition, may make a large library of what has been wrote for and against him, and is the subject of above half the paper that has been blotted in the nation within these twenty years. I wish for the honour of our country, that any one character of him had been drawn with such judgment and impartiality as to have credit with posterity, and to shew, that our liberty has, once at least, been employed to good purpose. I am only afraid, of failing in the former quality of judgment: But if it should be so, 'tis but one page more thrown away, after an hundred thousand, upon the same subject, that have perished, and become useless. In the mean time, I shall flatter myself with the pleasing imagination, that the following character will be adopted by future historians.*

Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, prime minister of GREAT BRITAIN, is a man of ability, not a genius; good-natured, not virtuous; constant, not magnanimous;



I have not here considered any thing that is personal in the present controversy. In the best civil constitution, where every man is restrained by the most rigid laws, it is easy to discover either the good or bad intentions of a minister, and to judge, whether his personal character deserves love or hatred. But such questions are of little importance to the public, and lay those who employ their pens upon them, under a just suspicion either of malevolence or flattery.

moderate, not equitable †; His virtues, in some instances, are free from the alloy of those vices, which usually accompany such virtues: He is a generous friend, without being a bitter enemy. His vices, in other instances, are not compensated by those virtues which are nearly allied to them; His want of enterprize is not attended with frugality. The private character of the man is better than the public: His virtues more than his vices: His fortune greater than his fame. With many good qualities he has incurred the public hatred: With good capacity he has not escaped ridicule. He would have been esteemed more worthy of his high station had he never possessed it; and is better qualified for the second than for the first place in any government. His ministry has been more advantageous to his family than to the public, better for this age than for posterity, and more pernicious by bad precedents than by real grievances. During his time trade has flourished, liberty declined, and learning gone to ruin. As I am a man, I love him; as I am a scholar I hate him; as I am a BRITON, I calmly wish his fall. And were I a member of either house, I would give my vote for removing him from ST. JAMES'S; but should be glad to see him retire to HOUGHTON-HALL, to pass the remainder of his days in ease and pleasure.

*The author is pleased to find, that after animosities are subsided, and calumny has ceased, the whole nation almost have returned to the same moderate sentiments with regard to this great man, if they are not rather become more favourable to him, by a very natural transition, from one extreme to another. The author would not oppose those humane sentiments towards the dead; though he cannot forbear observing, that the not paying more of our public debts was, as hinted in this character, a great, and the only great, error in that long administration.*

† *Moderate in the exercise of power, not equitable in engrossing it.*



## E S S A Y IV.

OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF  
GOVERNMENT.

NOTHING is more surprizing to those, who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than to see the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and to observe the implicit submission with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we enquire by what means this wonder is brought about, we shall find, that as FORCE is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. 'Tis therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular. The foldan of EGYPT, or the emperor of ROME, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination: But he must, at least, have led his *mamelukes*, or *prætorian bands*, like men, by their opinion.

Opinion is of two kinds, *viz.* opinion of INTEREST, and opinion of RIGHT. By opinion of interest, I chiefly understand the sense of the public advantage which is reaped from government; together with the persuasion, that the particular government, which is established, is equally advantageous with  
any



any other that could easily be settled. When this opinion prevails among the generality of a state, or among those who have the force in their hands, it gives great security to any government.

Right is of two kinds, right to POWER and right to PROPERTY. What prevalence opinion of the first kind has over mankind, may easily be understood by observing the attachment which all nations have to their ancient government, and even to those names which have had the sanction of antiquity. Antiquity always begets the opinion of right; and whatever disadvantageous sentiments we may entertain of mankind, they are always found to be prodigal both of blood and treasure in the maintenance of public justice. This passion we may denominate enthusiasm, or we may give it what appellation we please; but a politician, who should overlook its influence on human affairs, would prove himself but of a very limited understanding. There is, indeed, no particular, in which, at first sight, there may appear a greater contradiction in the frame of the human mind than the present. When men act in a faction, they are apt, without any shame or remorse, to neglect all the ties of honour and morality, in order to serve their party; and yet, when a faction is formed upon a point of right or principle, there is no occasion where men discover a greater obstinacy, and a more determined sense of justice and equity. The same social disposition of mankind is the cause of both these contradictory appearances.

'Tis sufficiently understood, that the opinion of right to property is of the greatest moment in all matters of government.

A noted



A noted author has made property the foundation of all government; and most of our political writers seem inclined to follow him in that particular. This is carrying the matter too far; but still it must be owned, that the opinion of right to property has a great influence in this subject.

Upon these three opinions, therefore, of public *interest*, of *right to power*, and of *right to property*, are all governments founded, and all authority of the few over the many. There are indeed other principles, which add force to these, and determine, limit, or alter their operation; such as *self-interest*, *fear*, and *affection*: But still we may assert, that these other principles can have no influence alone, but suppose the antecedent influence of those opinions above-mentioned. They are, therefore, to be esteemed the secondary, not the original principles of government.

For, *first*, as to *self-interest*, by which I mean the expectation of particular rewards, distinct from the general protection which we receive from government, 'tis evident that the magistrate's authority must be antecedently established, or, at least be hoped for, in order to produce this expectation. The prospect of reward may augment the authority with regard to some particular persons; but can never give birth to it, with regard to the public. Men naturally look for the greatest favours from their friends and acquaintance; and therefore, the hopes of any considerable number of the state, would never center in any particular set of men, if these men had no other title to magistracy, and had no separate influence over the opinions of mankind. The same observation may be extended to the other



two principles of *fear* and *affection*. No man would have any reason to *fear* the fury of a tyrant, if he had no authority over any but from fear; since, as a single man, his bodily force can reach but a small way, and all farther power he possesses must be founded either on our own opinion, or on the presumed opinion of others. And though *affection* to wisdom and virtue in a *sovereign* extends very far, and has great influence; yet he must be antecedently supposed invested with a public character, otherwise the public esteem will serve him in no stead, nor will his virtue have any influence beyond a narrow sphere.

A Government may endure for several ages, though the balance of power, and the balance of property do not agree. This chiefly happens, where any rank or order of the state has acquired a large share of the property; but, from the original constitution of the government, has no share of the power. Under what pretext would any individual of that order assume authority in public affairs? As men are commonly much attached to their ancient government, it is not to be expected, that the public would ever favour such usurpations. But where the original constitution allows any share of power, though small, to an order of men, who possess a large share of the property, 'tis easy for them gradually to stretch their authority, and bring the balance of power to coincide with that of property. This has been the case with the house of commons in ENGLAND.

Most writers, who have treated of the BRITISH government, have supposed, that as the house of commons represents all the commons of GREAT BRITAIN; so its weight in the scale is pro-



proportioned to the property and power of all whom it represents. But this principle must not be received as absolutely true. For though the people are apt to attach themselves more to the house of commons, than to any other member of the constitution; that house being chosen by them as their representatives, and as the public guardians of their liberty; yet are there instances where the house, even when in opposition to the crown, has not been followed by the people; as we may particularly observe of the *tory* house of commons in the reign of king WILLIAM. Were the members of the house obliged to receive instructions from their constituents, like the DUTCH deputies, this would entirely alter the case; and, if such immense power and riches, as those of the whole commons of BRITAIN, were brought into the scale, 'tis not easy to conceive, that the crown could either influence that multitude of people, or withstand that overbalance of property. 'Tis true, the crown has great influence over the collective body of BRITAIN in the elections of members; but were this influence, which at present is only exerted once in seven years, to be employed in bringing over the people to every vote, it would soon be wasted; and no skill, popularity or revenue, could support it. I must, therefore, be of opinion, that an alteration, in this particular, would introduce a total alteration in our government, and would soon reduce it to a pure republic; and, perhaps, to a republic of no inconvenient form. For though the people collected in a body like the ROMAN tribes, be quite unfit for government, yet when dispersed in small bodies, they are more susceptible both of reason and order; the force of popular currents and tides is, in a great measure, broke; and the

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public



public interest may be pursued with some method and constancy. But 'tis needless to reason any farther concerning a form of government, which is never likely to have place in BRITAIN, and which seems not to be the aim of any party amongst us. Let us cherish and improve our ancient government as much as possible, without encouraging a passion for such dangerous novelties.





## E S S A Y V.

## OF THE INDEPENDENCY OF PARLIAMENT.

POLITICAL writers have established it as a maxim, That in contriving any system of government, and fixing the several checks and controuls of the constitution, every man ought to be supposed a *knave*, and to have no other end, in all his actions, but private interest. By this interest we must govern him, and, by means of it, make him co-operate to public good, notwithstanding his insatiable avarice and ambition. Without this, say they, we shall in vain boast of the advantages of any constitution, and shall find, in the end, that we have no security for our liberties or possessions, except the good-will of our rulers; that is, we shall have no security at all.

'Tis, therefore, a just *political* maxim, *That every man must be supposed a knave*; Though at the same time, it appears somewhat strange, that a maxim should be true in *politics*, which is false in *fact*. But in order to be satisfied on this head, we may consider, that men are generally more honest in their private than in their public capacity, and will go greater lengths to serve a party, than when their own private interest is alone concerned. Honour is a great check upon mankind: But where a considerable body of men act together, this check is, in a great measure, removed; since a man is sure to be approved of by his own



own party, for what promotes the common interest, and he soon learns to despise the clamours of his adversaries. To which we may add, that every court or senate is determined by the greater number of voices; so that, if selfish views influence only the majority, (as they will always do) the whole senate follows the allurements of this separate interest, and acts as if it contained not one member, who had any regard to public interest and liberty.

When there offers, therefore, to our censure, and examination, any plan of government, real or imaginary, where the power is distributed among several courts, and several orders of men, we should always consider the private interest of each court, and each order; and, if we find, that, by the skilful division of the power, the private interest must necessarily, in its operation, concur with the public, we may pronounce that government to be wise and happy. If, on the contrary, the private interest of each order be not checked, and be not directed to public interest, we ought to look for nothing but faction, disorder, and tyranny from such a government. In this opinion we are justified by experience, as well as by the authority of all philosophers and politicians both antient and modern.

How much, therefore, would it have surprized such a genius as CICERO, or TACITUS, to have been told, That, in a future age, there should arise a very regular system of *mixt* government, where the authority was so distributed, that one rank, whenever it pleased, might swallow up all the rest, and engross the whole power of the constitution. Such a government, they would say, will not be a mixed government. For so great is the

the natural ambition of men, that they are never satisfied with power; and if one order of men, by pursuing its own interest, can usurp upon every other order, it will certainly do so, and render itself, as far as possible, absolute and uncontrollable.

But, in this opinion, experience shews that they would have been mistaken. For this is actually the case with the BRITISH constitution. The share of power allotted by our constitution to the house of commons is so great, that it absolutely commands all the other parts of the government. The king's legislative power is plainly no proper check to it. For though the king has a negative in the passing of laws; yet this, in fact, is esteemed of so little moment, that whatever is voted by the two houses, is always sure to pass into a law, and the royal assent is little better than a mere form. The principal weight of the crown lies in the executive power. But besides that the executive power in every government, is altogether subordinate to the legislative; besides this, I say, the exercise of this power requires an immense expence, and the commons have assumed to themselves the sole power of disposing of public money. How easy, therefore, would it be for that house to wrest from the crown all these powers, one after another, by making every grant of money conditional, and choosing their time so well, that their refusal of supplies should only distress the government, without giving foreign powers any advantage over us? Did the house of commons depend in the same manner on the king, and had none of the members any property but from his gift, would not he command all their resolutions, and be from that moment absolute? As to the house of lords, they are a very powerful support to the crown so long as they are, in their turn, supported by it; but both experience



and reason shew us, that they have neither force nor authority sufficient to maintain themselves alone, without such support.

How, therefore, shall we solve this paradox? And by what means is this member of our constitution confined within the proper limits; since, from our very constitution, it must necessarily have as much power as it demands, and can only be confined by itself? How is this consistent with our experience of human nature? I answer, that the interest of the body is here restrained by the interest of the individuals, and that the house of commons stretches not its power, because such an usurpation would be contrary to the interest of the majority of its members. The crown has so many offices at its disposal, that, when assisted by the honest and disinterested part of the house, it will always command the resolutions of the whole; so far at least, as to preserve the ancient constitution from danger. We may, therefore, give to this influence what name we please; we may call it by the invidious appellations of *corruption* and *dependence*; but some degree and some kind of it are inseparable, from the very nature of the constitution, and necessary to the preservation of our mixed government.

Instead then of asserting † absolutely, that the dependence of parliament, in every degree, is an infringement of BRITISH liberty, the country-party had better have made some concessions to their adversaries, and have only examined what was the proper degree of this dependence, beyond which it became dangerous to liberty. But such a moderation is not to be expected of party-men of any kind. After a concession of this nature, all declamation must

† See *Dissertation on Parties*, throughout.

be abandoned; and a serious calm enquiry into the proper degree of court-influence, and parliamentary dependence would have been expected by the readers. And though the advantage, in such a controversy, might possibly remain to the *country-party*; yet the victory would not be so compleat as they wish for, nor would a true patriot have given an entire loose to his zeal, for fear of running matters into a contrary extreme, by diminishing too † far the influence of the crown. It was, therefore, thought best to deny, that this extreme could ever be dangerous to the constitution, or that the crown could ever have too little influence over members of parliament.

All questions concerning the proper medium between extremes are very difficult to be decided; both because it is not easy to find *words* proper to fix this medium, and because the good and ill, in such cases, run so gradually into each other, as even to render our *sentiments* doubtful and uncertain. But there is a peculiar difficulty in the present case, which would embarrass the most knowing and most impartial examiner. The power of the crown is always lodged in a single person, either king or minister; and as this person may have either a greater or less degree of ambition, capacity, courage, popularity or fortune, the power, which is too great in one hand, may become too little in another. In pure republics, where the power is

† By that *influence of the Crown*, which I would justify, I mean only, that arising from the offices and honours which are at the disposal of the crown. As to private *bribery*, it may be considered in the same light as the practice of employing spies, which is scarce justifiable in a good minister, and is infamous in a bad one: But to be a spy, or to be corrupted, is always infamous under all ministers, and is to be regarded as a shameless prostitution. POLYBIUS justly esteems the pecuniary influence of the senate and censors in giving offices to be one of the regular and constitutional weights, which preserved the balance of the ROMAN government. Lib. 6. cap. 15.



distributed among several assemblies or senates, the checks and controuls are more regular in their operation; because the members of such numerous assemblies may be presumed to be always nearly equal in capacity and virtue; and 'tis only their number, riches, or authority, which enter into consideration. But a limited monarchy admits not of any such stability; nor is it possible to assign to the crown such a determinate degree of power, as will, in every hand, form a proper counter-balance to the other parts of the constitution. This is an unavoidable disadvantage, among the many advantages, attending that species of government.



## E S S A Y VI.

### WHETHER THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT INCLINES MORE TO ABSOLUTE MONARCHY, OR TO A REPUBLIC.

**I**T affords a violent prejudice against almost every science, that no prudent man, however sure of his principles, dares to prophesy concerning any event, or foretell the remote consequences of things. A physician will not venture to pronounce concerning the condition of his patient a fortnight or month after : And still less dares a politician foretell the situation of public affairs a few years hence. HARRINGTON thought himself so sure of his general principle, *That the balance of power depends on that of property*, that he ventured to pronounce it impossible ever to re-establish monarchy in ENGLAND : But his book was scarce published when the king was restored ; and we see that monarchy has ever since subsisted upon the same footing as before. Notwithstanding this unlucky example, I will venture to examine a very important question, *viz. Whether the BRITISH government inclines more to absolute monarchy, or to a republic ; and in which of these two species of government it will most probably terminate ?* As there seems not to be any great danger of a sudden revolution either way, I shall at least escape the shame attending my temerity, if I should be found to have been mistaken.



Those who assert, That the balance of our government inclines towards absolute monarchy, may support their opinion by the following reasons. That property has a great influence on power cannot possibly be denied; but yet the general maxim, *That the balance of one depends on the balance of the other*, must be received with several limitations. 'Tis evident, that much less property in a single hand will be able to counter-balance a greater property in several hands; not only because it is difficult to make many persons combine in the same views and measures; but also because property, when united, causes much greater dependance, than the same property, when dispersed. An hundred persons, of 1000 *l.* a year a-piece, can consume all their income, and no body shall ever be the better for them, except their servants and tradesmen, who justly regard their profits as the product of their own labour. But a man possessed of 100,000 *l.* a year, if he has either any generosity, or any cunning, may create a great dependance by obligations, and still a greater by expectations. Hence we may observe, that in all free governments any subject exorbitantly rich has always created a jealousy, even though his riches bore no manner of proportion to the riches of the state. CRASSUS's fortune, if I remember well, amounted only to about sixteen hundred thousand pounds in our money; and yet we find, that though his genius was nothing extraordinary, he was able, by means of his riches alone, to counter-balance, during his life-time, the power of POMPEY as well as that of CÆSAR, who afterwards became master of the world. The wealth of the MEDICIS made them masters of FLORENCE; though, 'tis probable, it was very inconsiderable, compared to the united property of that opulent republic.

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These considerations are apt to make one entertain a very magnificent idea of the BRITISH spirit and love of liberty; since we could maintain our free government, during so many centuries, against our sovereigns, who, besides the power and dignity and majesty of the crown, have always been possessed of much greater riches than any subject has ever enjoyed in any commonwealth. But it may be said, that this spirit, however great, will never be able to support itself against that immense property, which is now lodged in the king, and which is still encreasing. Upon a moderate computation, there are near three millions at the disposal of the crown. The civil list amounts to near a million; the collection of all taxes to another million; and the employments in the army and navy, together with ecclesiastical preferments, to above a third million: An enormous sum, and what may fairly be computed to be more than a thirtieth part of the whole income and labour of the kingdom. When we add to this immense property, the increasing luxury of the nation, our proneness to corruption, together with the great power and prerogatives of the crown, and the command of such numerous military forces, there is no one but must despair of being able, without extraordinary efforts, to support our free government much longer under all these disadvantages.

On the other hand, those who maintain, that the bias of the BRITISH government leans towards a republic, may support their opinion by very specious arguments. It may be said, that though this immense property in the crown, be joined to the dignity of first magistrate, and to many other legal powers and prerogatives, which should naturally give it a greater influence; yet it really becomes less dangerous to liberty upon  
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that very account. Were BRITAIN a republic, and were any private man possessed of a revenue, a third, or even a tenth part as large as that of the crown, he would very justly excite jealousy; because he would infallibly have great authority in the government: And such an irregular authority, not avowed by the laws, is always more dangerous than a much greater authority, which is derived from them. A man possessed of usurped power, can set no bounds to his pretensions: His partizans have liberty to hope for every thing in his favour: His enemies provoke his ambition, with his fears, by the violence of their opposition: And the government being thrown into a ferment, every corrupted humour in the state naturally gathers to him. On the contrary, a legal authority, though very great, has always some bounds, which terminate both the hopes and pretensions of the person possessed of it: The laws must have provided a remedy against its excesses: Such an eminent magistrate has much to fear, and little to hope from his usurpations: And as his legal authority is quietly submitted to, he has small temptation and small opportunity of extending it farther. Besides, it happens, with regard to ambitious aims and projects, what may be observed with regard to sects of philosophy and religion. A new sect excites such ferment, and is both opposed and defended with such vehemence, that it spreads always faster, and multiplies its partizans with greater rapidity, than any old established opinion, recommended by the sanction of the laws and of antiquity. Such is the nature of novelty, that where any thing pleases it becomes doubly agreeable, if new; but if it displeases, it is doubly displeasing, upon that very account. And, in most cases, the violence of enemies is favourable to ambitious projects, as well as the zeal of partizans.

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It may further be said, that though men be very much governed by interest; yet even interest itself, and all human affairs, are entirely governed by *opinion*. Now, there has been a very sudden and a very sensible change in the opinions of men within these last fifty years, by the progress of learning and of liberty. Most people, in this island, have divested themselves, of all superstitious reverence to names and authority: The clergy have much lost their credit: Their pretensions and doctrines have been ridiculed; and even religion can scarce support itself in the world. The mere name of *king* commands little respect; and to talk of a king as GOD's vicegerent on earth, or to give him any of those magnificent titles, which formerly dazzled mankind, would but excite laughter in every one. Though the crown, by means of its large revenue, may maintain its authority in times of tranquillity, upon private interest and influence; yet as the least shock or convulsion must break all these interests to pieces, the kingly power being no longer supported by the settled principles and opinions of men, will immediately dissolve. Had men been in the same disposition at the *revolution*, as they are at present, monarchy would have run a great risque of being entirely lost in this island.

Durst I venture to deliver my own sentiments amidst these opposite arguments, I would assert, that unless there happen some extraordinary convulsion, the power of the crown, by means of its large revenue, is rather upon the increase; though, at the same time I own, that its progress seems very slow, and almost insensible. The tide has run long, and with some rapidity, to the side of popular government, and is just beginning to turn towards monarchy.

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'Tis well known that every government must come to a period, and that death is unavoidable to the political as well as to the animal body. But, as one kind of death may be preferable to another, it may be enquired, whether it be more desirable for the BRITISH constitution to terminate in a popular government, or an absolute monarchy? Here I would declare frankly, that though liberty be infinitely preferable to slavery, in almost every case; yet I should much rather wish to see an absolute monarch than a republic in this island. For, let us consider, what kind of republic we have reason to expect. The question is not concerning any fine imaginary republic, of which a man may form a plan in his closet. There is no doubt, but a popular government may be imagined more perfect than absolute monarchy, or even than our present constitution. But what reason have we to expect that any such government will ever be established in BRITAIN, upon the dissolution of our monarchy? If any single person acquire power enough to take our constitution to pieces, and put it up a-new, he is really an absolute monarch; and we have had already an instance of this kind, sufficient to convince us, that such a person will never resign his power, or establish any free government. Matters, therefore, must be trusted to their natural progress and operation; and the house of commons, according to its present constitution, must be the only legislature in such a popular government. The inconveniences, attending such a situation of affairs, present themselves by thousands. If the house of commons, in such a case, ever dissolves itself, which is not to be expected, we may look for a civil war every election. If it continues itself, we shall suffer all the tyranny of a faction, subdivided into new factions. And as such a violent govern-  
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ment cannot long subsist, we shall, at last, after infinite convulsions, and civil wars, find repose in absolute monarchy, which it would have been happier for us to have established peaceably from the beginning. Absolute monarchy, therefore, is the easiest death, the true *Euthanasia* of the BRITISH constitution.

Thus, if we have reason to be more jealous of monarchy, because the danger is more imminent from that quarter; we have also reason to be more jealous of popular government, because that danger is more terrible. This may teach us a lesson of moderation in all our political controversies.



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## E S S A Y VII.

### OF PARTIES IN GENERAL.

**O**F all mén, who distinguish themselves by memorable achievements, the first place of honour seems due to **LEGISLATORS**, and founders of states, who transmit a system of laws and institutions to secure the peace, happiness, and liberty of future generations. The influence of useful inventions in the arts and sciences may, perhaps, extend farther than those of wise laws, whose effects are limited both in time and place; but the benefit arising from the former is not so sensible as that which proceeds from the latter. Speculative sciences do, indeed, improve the mind; but this advantage reaches only to a few persons, who have leisure to apply themselves to them. And as to practical arts, which increase the commodities and enjoyments of life, it is well known, that mens happiness consists not so much in an abundance of these, as in the peace and security with which they possess them; and those blessings can only be derived from good government. Not to mention, that general virtue and good morals in a state, which are so requisite to happiness, can never arise from the most refined precepts of philosophy, or even the severest injunctions of religion; but must proceed entirely from the virtuous education of the youth, the effect of wise laws and institutions.

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I must, therefore, presume to differ from my Lord BACON in this particular, and must regard antiquity as somewhat unjust in its distribution of honour, when it made gods of all the inventors of useful arts, such as CERES, BACCHUS, ÆSCULAPIUS; and dignified legislators, such as ROMULUS and THESEUS, only with the appellation of demigods and heroes.

As much as legislators and founders of states ought to be honoured and respected among men, as much ought the founders of sects and factions to be detested and hated; because the influence of faction is directly contrary to that of laws. Factions subvert government, render laws impotent, and beget the fiercest animosities among men of the same nation, who ought to give mutual assistance and protection to each other. And what should render the founders of parties more odious is, the difficulty of extirpating these parties, when once they have taken rise in any state. They naturally propagate themselves for many centuries, and seldom end but by the total dissolution of that government, in which they are planted. They are, besides, seeds which grow most plentifully in the richest soils; and though despotic governments be not entirely free from them, it must be confessed, that they rise more easily, and propagate themselves faster in free governments, where they always infect the legislature itself, which alone could be able, by the steady application of rewards and punishments, to eradicate them.

Factions or parties may be divided into PERSONAL and REAL; that is, into factions founded on personal friendship or animosity among those who compose the factions, and into those founded on some real difference of sentiment or interest.

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The reason of this distinction is obvious though I must acknowledge, that parties are seldom found pure and unmixed, either of the one kind or the other. 'Tis not often seen, that a government divides into factions, where there is no difference in the views of the constituent members, either real or apparent, trivial or material: And in those factions, which are founded on the most real and most material difference, there is always observed to be a great deal of personal animosity or affection. But notwithstanding this mixture, a party may be denominated either personal or real, according to that principle which is predominant, and is found to have the greatest influence.

Personal factions arise most easily in small republics. Every domestic quarrel becomes an affair of state. Love, vanity, emulation, any passion begets public division, as well as ambition and resentment. The NERI and BIANCHI of FLORENCE, the FREGOSI and ADORNI of GENOA, the COLONESI and ORSINI of modern ROME, were parties of this kind.

Men have such a propensity to divide into personal factions, that the smallest appearance of real difference will produce them. What can be imagined more trivial than the difference between one colour of livery and another in horse-races? Yet this difference begot two most inveterate factions in the GREEK empire, the PRASINI and VENETI, who never suspended their animosities, till they ruined that unhappy government.

We find in the ROMAN history a very remarkable faction between two tribes, the POLLIA and PAPIRIA, which continued for the space of near three hundred years, and discovered itself

itself in their suffrages at every election of magistrates\*. This faction was the more remarkable, as it could continue for so long a tract of time; even though it did not spread itself, nor draw any of the other tribes into a share of the quarrel. If mankind had not a strong propensity to such divisions, the indifference of the rest of the community must have suppressed this foolish animosity, that had not any aliment of new benefits and injuries, of general sympathy and antipathy, which never fail to take place when the whole state is rent into two equal factions..

Nothing is more usual than to see parties, which have begun upon a real difference, continue even after that difference is lost. When men are once enlisted on opposite sides, they contract an affection to the persons with whom they are united, and an animosity against their antagonists: And these passions they often transmit to their posterity. The real difference between GUELF and Ghibbelline was long lost in ITALY, before these factions were extinguished. The GUELFs adhered to the pope, the Ghibbellines to the emperor; and yet the family of SFORSA, who were in alliance with the emperor, though they were GUELFs, being expelled MILAN by the

\* As this fact has not been much observed by antiquaries or politicians, I shall deliver it in the words of the ROMAN historian. *Populus TUSCULANUS cum conjugibus ac liberis ROMAM venit: Ea multitudo, veste mutata, & specie reorum tribus circuit, genibus se omnium advolvens. Plus itaque misericordia ad pœnæ veniam impetrandam, quam causa ad crimen purgandum valuit. Tribus omnes præter POLLIAM, antiquarunt legem. POLLIAE sententia fuit, puberes verberatos necari, liberos conjugisque sub corona lege belli venire: Memoriamque ejus iræ TUSCULANIS in pœnæ tam atrocis auctores mansisse ad patris ætatem constat; nec quemquam fere ex POLLIA tribu candidatum PAPIRAM ferre solitam, T. LIVII, lib. 8. The CASTELANI and NICOLLOTI are two mobbish factions in VENICE, who frequently box together, and then lay aside their quarrels presently.*



king \* of FRANCE, assisted by JACOMO TRIVULZIO and the Ghibbellines, the pope concurred with the latter, and they formed leagues with the pope against the emperor.

The civil wars which arose some few years ago in MOROCCO, betwixt the *blacks* and *whites*, merely on account of their complexion, are founded on a very pleasant difference. We laugh at them; but I believe, were things rightly examined, we afford much more occasion of ridicule to the MOORS. For, what are all the wars of religion, which have prevailed in this polite and knowing part of the world? They are certainly more absurd than the MOORISH civil wars. The difference of complexion is a sensible and a real difference: But the difference about an article of faith, which is utterly absurd and unintelligible, is not a difference of sentiments, but only a difference of a few phrases and expressions, which one party accepts of, without understanding them; and the other rejects in the same manner. Besides, I do not find, that the *whites* in MOROCCO ever imposed on the *blacks* any necessity of altering their complexion, or threatened them with inquisitions and penal laws in case of obstinacy: nor have the *blacks* been more unreasonable in this particular. But is a man's opinion, where he is able to form a real opinion, more at his disposal than his complexion? And can one be induced by force or fear to do more than paint and disguise in the one case as well as in the other?

*Real* factions may be divided into factions from *interest*, from *principle*, and from *affection*. Of all factions, those from interest are the most reasonable, and the most excusable. Where

\* LEWIS XI.

two orders of men, such as the nobles and people, have a distinct authority in a government, which is not very accurately balanced and modelled, they naturally follow a distinct interest; nor can we reasonably expect a different conduct, considering that degree of selfishness, which is implanted in human nature. It requires very great skill in a legislator to prevent such factions; and many philosophers are of opinion, that this secret, like the *grand elixir*, or *perpetual motion*, may amuse men in theory, but can never possibly be reduced to practice. In despotic governments, indeed, factions often do not appear; but they are not the less real; or rather, they are more real and more pernicious, upon that very account. The distinct orders of men, nobles and people, foldiers and merchants, have all a distinct interest; but the more powerful oppresses the weaker with impunity, and without resistance; which begets a seeming tranquillity in such governments.

There has been an attempt to divide the *landed* and *trading* interest of ENGLAND; but without success. The interest of these two bodies is not really distinct, and never will be so, till our public debts increase to such a degree, as to become altogether oppressive and intolerable.

Parties from *principles*, especially abstract speculative principles, are known only to modern times, and are, perhaps, the most extraordinary and unaccountable *phenomenon*, that has ever yet appeared in human affairs. Where different principles beget a contrariety of conduct, which is the case with all different political principles, the matter may be more easily explained. A man, who esteems the true right of government to lie in one man, or one family, cannot easily agree with his fellow-



fellow citizen, who thinks that another man or family is possessed of this right. Each naturally wishes that right may take place, according to his own notions of it. But where the difference of principles is attended with no contrariety of action, but each may follow his own way, without interfering with his neighbour, as happens in all religious controversies; what madness, what fury can beget such unhappy and such fatal divisions?

Two men, travelling on the highway, the one east, the other west, can easily pass each other, if the way be broad enough: But two men, reasoning upon opposite principles of religion, cannot so easily pass, without shocking; though one should think, that the way were also, in that case, sufficiently broad, and that each might proceed, without interruption, in his own course. But such is the nature of the human mind, that it always takes hold of every mind that approaches it; and as it is wonderfully fortified and corroborated by an unanimity of sentiments, so is it shocked and disturbed by any contrariety. Hence the eagerness, which most people discover in a dispute; and hence their impatience of opposition, even in the most speculative and indifferent opinions.

This principle, however frivolous it may appear, seems to have been the origin of all religious wars and divisions. But as this principle is universal in human nature, its effects would not have been confined to one age, and to one sect of religion, did it not there concur with other more accidental causes, which raise it to such a height as to produce the highest disorder and devastation. Most religions of the ancient world arose in the unknown ages of government, when men were as yet barba-

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rous and uninstructed, and the prince, as well as peasant, was disposed to receive, with implicit faith, every pious tale or fiction which was offered him. The magistrate embraced the religion of the people, and entering cordially into the care of sacred matters, naturally acquired an authority in them, and united the ecclesiastical with the civil power. But the *Christian* religion arising, while principles directly opposite to it were firmly established in the polite part of the world, who despised the nation that first broached this novelty; no wonder, that in such circumstances, it was but little countenanced by the civil magistrate, and that the priesthood were allowed to engross all the authority in the new sect. So bad a use did they make of this power, even in those early times, that the persecutions of Christianity may, perhaps, *in part* \*, be ascribed to the violence instilled by them into their followers. And the same principles of priestly government continuing, after Christianity became

\* I say, *in part*; For 'tis a vulgar error to imagine, that the ancients were as great friends to toleration, as the ENGLISH or DUTCH are at present. The laws against external superstition, amongst the ROMANS, were as ancient as the time of the twelve tables; and the JEWS as well as CHRISTIANS were sometimes punished by them; though, in general, these laws were not rigorously executed. Immediately after the conquest of GAUL, the ROMANS forbade all but the natives to be initiated into the religion of the DRUIDS; and this was a kind of persecution. In about a century after this conquest, the emperor, CLAUDIUS, quite abolished that superstition by penal laws; which would have been a very grievous persecution, if the imitation of the ROMAN manners had not, before-hand, weaned the GAULS from their ancient prejudices. SUTONIUS *in vita CLAUDII*. PLINY ascribes the abolition of the Druid superstition to TIBERIUS, probably because that emperor had taken some steps towards restraining them, (lib. 30. cap. 1.) This is an instance of the usual caution and moderation of the ROMANS in such cases; and very different from their violent and sanguinary method of treating the *Christians*. Hence we may entertain a suspicion, that those furious persecutions of *Christianity* were, in some measure, owing to the imprudent zeal and bigotry of the first propagators of that sect; and Ecclesiastical history affords us many reasons to confirm this suspicion.



the established religion, they have engendered a spirit of persecution, which has ever since been the poison of human society, and the source of the most inveterate factions in every government. Such factions, therefore, on the part of the people, may justly be esteemed factions of *principle*: but, on the part of the priests, who are the prime movers, they are really factions of *interest*.

There is another cause (beside the authority of the priests, and the separation of the ecclesiastical and civil powers) which has contributed to render CHRISTENDOM the scene of religious wars and divisions. Religions, that arise in ages totally ignorant and barbarous, consist mostly of traditional tales and fictions, which may be very different in every sect, without being contrary, to each other; and even when they are contrary, every one adheres to the tradition of his own sect, without much reasoning or disputation. But as philosophy was widely spread over the world, at the time when Christianity arose, the teachers of the new sect were obliged to form a system of speculative opinions; to divide, with some accuracy, their articles of faith; and to explain, comment, confute, and confirm with all the subtilty of argument and science. From hence naturally arose keenness in dispute, when the Christian religion came to be split into new divisions and heresies: And this keenness assisted the priests in their policy, of begetting a mutual hatred and antipathy among the deluded followers. Sects of philosophy in the ancient world, were more zealous than parties of religion; but in modern times, parties of religion are more furious and enraged than the most cruel factions that ever arose from interest and ambition.

I have mentioned parties from *affection* as a kind of *real* parties, beside those from *interest* and *principle*. By parties from affection, I understand those which are founded on the different affections of men towards particular families and persons, whom they desire to rule over them. These parties are often very violent; though, I must own, it is somewhat unaccountable, that men should attach themselves so strongly to persons, with whom they are no wise acquainted, whom perhaps they never saw, and from whom they never received, nor can ever hope for any favour. Yet this we find often to be the case, and even with men, who, on other occasions, discover no great generosity of spirit, nor are found to be easily transported by friendship beyond their own interest. We are apt, I know not how, to think the relation between us and our sovereign very close and intimate. The splendor of majesty and power bestows an importance on the fortunes even of a single person. And when a man's good-nature gives him not this imaginary interest, his ill-nature will, from spite and opposition to persons whose sentiments are different from his own.



## E S S A Y VIII.

## OF THE PARTIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

WERE the BRITISH government proposed as a subject of speculation to a studious man, he would immediately perceive in it a source of division and party, which it would be almost impossible for it, under any administration, to avoid. The just balance between the republican and monarchical part of our constitution is really, in itself, so extremely delicate and uncertain, that when joined to mens passions and prejudices, 'tis impossible but different opinions must arise concerning it, even among persons of the best understanding. Those of mild tempers, who love peace and order, and detest sedition and civil wars, will always entertain more favourable sentiments of monarchy, than men of bold and generous spirits, who are passionate lovers of liberty, and think no evil comparable to subjection and slavery. And though all reasonable men agree in general to preserve our mixed government; yet when they come to particulars, some will incline to trust larger powers to the crown, to bestow on it more influence, and to guard against its encroachments, with less caution, than others who are terrified at the most distant approaches of tyranny and despotic power. Thus are there parties of PRINCIPLE involved in the very nature of our constitution, which may properly enough be

be denominated those of \* COURT and COUNTRY. The strength and violence of each of these parties will much depend upon the particular administration. An administration may be so bad, as to throw a great majority into the opposition; as a good administration will reconcile to the court many of the most passionate lovers of liberty. But however the nation may fluctuate between them, the parties themselves will always subsist so long as we are governed by a limited monarchy.

But, besides this difference of *Principle*, those parties are very much fomented by a difference of INTEREST, without which they could scarce ever be dangerous or violent. The will naturally bestow all its trust and power upon those, whose principles, real or pretended, are most favourable to monarchical government; and this temptation will naturally engage them to go greater lengths than their principles would otherwise carry them. Their antagonists, who are disappointed in their ambitious aims, throw themselves into the party whose principles incline them to be most jealous of royal power, and naturally carry those principles to a greater length than sound politics will justify. Thus the *Court* and *Country* parties, which are the genuine offspring of the BRITISH government, are a kind of mixt parties, and are influenced both by principle and

\* These words have become of general use, and therefore I shall employ them, without intending to express by them an universal blame of the one party, or approbation of the other. The court-party may, no doubt, on some occasions consult best the interest of the country, and the country-party oppose it. In like manner, the ROMAN parties were denominated *Optimates* and *Populares*; and CICERO, like a true party man, defines the *Optimates* to be such as, in all their public conduct, regulated themselves by the sentiments of the best and worthiest of the ROMANS: *Pro Sextio*, cap. 45. The term of *Country-party* may afford a favourable definition or etymology of the same kind: But it would be folly to draw any argument from that head, and I have no regard to it in employing these terms.



by interest. The heads of the factions are commonly most governed by the latter motive; the inferior members of them by the former. I must be understood to mean this of persons who have motives for taking party on any side. For, to tell the truth, the greatest part are commonly men who associate themselves they know not why; from example, from passion, from idleness. But still it is requisite, that there be some source of division, either in principle or interest; otherwise such persons would not find parties, to which they could associate themselves.

As to ecclesiastical parties; we may observe, that, in all ages of the world, priests have been enemies to liberty\*, and it is certain, that this steady conduct of theirs must have been founded on fixt reasons of interest and ambition. Liberty of thinking, and of expressing our thoughts, is always fatal to priestly power, and to those pious frauds, on which it is commonly founded; and, by an infallible connexion, which prevails among every species of liberty, this privilege can never be enjoyed, at least, has never yet been enjoyed, but in a free government. Hence it must happen, in such a government as that of BRITAIN, that the established clergy, while things are in their natural situation, will always be of the *Court-party*; as, on the contrary, dissenters of all kinds will be of the *Country-party*; since they can never hope for that toleration, which they stand in need of, but by means of our free constitution. All princes, who have aimed at despotic power,

\* This proposition is true, notwithstanding, that in the early times of the ENGLISH government, the clergy were the great and principal opposers of the crown: But, at that time, their possessions were so immensely great, that they composed a considerable part of the proprietors of ENGLAND, and in many contests were direct rivals of the crown.

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have known of what importance it was to gain the established clergy: As the clergy, on their side, have shewn a great facility of entering into the views of such princes\*. GUSTAVUS VAZA was, perhaps, the only ambitious monarch, that ever depressed the church, at the same time that he discouraged liberty. But the exorbitant power of the bishops in SWEDEN, who, at that time, overtopped the crown itself, together with their attachment to a foreign family, was the reason of his embracing such an unusual system of politics.

This observation concerning the propensity of priests to despotic power, and to the government of a single person, is not true with regard to one sect only. The *Presbyterian* and *Calvinistic* clergy in HOLLAND were always professed friends to the family of ORANGE; as the *Arminians*, who were esteemed heretics, were always of the LOUVESTEIN faction, and zealous for liberty. But if a prince has the choice of both, 'tis easy to see, that he will prefer the episcopal to the presbyterian form of government, both because of the greater affinity between monarchy and episcopacy, and because of the facility which a prince finds, in such a government, of ruling the clergy, by means of their ecclesiastical superiors†.

If we consider the first rise of parties in ENGLAND, during the civil wars, we shall find, that it was exactly conformable to this general theory, and that the species of government gave

\* Judæi sibi ipsi reges imposuere; qui mobilitate vulgi expulsi, resumpta per arma dominatione; fugas civium, urbium everfiones, fratrum, conjugum, parentum neces, aliaque solita regibus aut, superstitionem fovebant; quia honor sacerdotii firmamentum potentiae assumebatur. TACIT. *hist. lib. 5.*

† Populi imperium juxta libertatem: paucorum dominatio regiae libidini propriior est. TACIT. *Ann. lib. 6.*



birth to these parties, by a regular and infallible operation. The ENGLISH constitution, before that time, had lain in a kind of confusion; yet so, as that the subjects possessed many noble privileges, which, though not, perhaps, exactly bounded and secured by law, were universally deemed, from long possession, to belong to them as their birth-right. An ambitious, or rather an ignorant, prince arose, who esteemed all these privileges to be concessions of his predecessors, revocable at pleasure; and, in prosecution of this principle, he openly acted in violation of liberty, during the course of several years. Necessity, at last, constrained him to call a parliament: The spirit of liberty arose and spread itself: The prince, being without any support, was obliged to grant every thing required of him: And his enemies, jealous and implacable, set no bounds to their pretensions, Here then began those contests, in which it was no wonder, that men of that age were divided into different parties; since, even at this day, the impartial are at a loss to decide concerning the justice of the quarrel. The pretensions of the parliament, if yielded to, broke the balance of the constitution, by rendering the government almost entirely republican. If not yielded to, the nation were, perhaps, still in danger of despotic power, from the settled principles and inveterate habits of the king, which had plainly appeared in every concession that he had been constrained to make to his people. In this question, so delicate and uncertain, men naturally fell to the side which was most conformable to their usual principles; and those, who were the most passionate favourers of monarchy, declared for the king, as the zealous friends of liberty, sided with the parliament. The hopes of success being nearly equal on both sides, *interest* had no general influence in this contest: So that

ROUND--

ROUND-HEAD and CAVALIER were merely parties of principle; neither of which disowned either monarchy or liberty; but the former party inclined most to the republican part of our government, and the latter to the monarchical. In this respect, they may be considered as court and country-party, enflamed into a civil war, by an unhappy concurrence of circumstances, and by the turbulent spirit of the age. The commonwealth's men, and the partizans of despotic power, lay concealed in both parties, and formed but an inconsiderable part of them.

The clergy had concurred with the king's arbitrary designs, according to their usual maxims in such cases: And, in return, were allowed to persecute their adversaries, whom they called heretics and schismatics. The established clergy were episcopal; the non-conformists presbyterian: So that all things concurred to throw the former, without reserve, into the king's party; and the latter into that of the parliament. The *Cavaliers* being the court-party, and the *Round-heads* the country-party, the union was infallible between the former and the established prelacy, and between the latter and presbyterian non-conformists. This union is so natural, according to the general principles of politics, that it requires some very extraordinary situation of affairs to break it.

Every one knows the event of this quarrel; fatal to the king first, and to the parliament afterwards. After many confusions and revolutions, the royal family was at last restored, and the government established on the same footing as before. CHARLES II. was not made wiser by the example of his father; but prosecuted the same measures; though, at first with more secrecy and caution. New parties arose, under the ap-  
 VOL. I. K pellation



pellation of *Whig* or *Tory*, which have continued ever since to confound and distract our government. What the nature is of these parties, is, perhaps, one of the most difficult questions, which can be met with, and is a proof that history may contain problems, as uncertain as any, which are to be found in the most abstract sciences. We have seen the conduct of these two parties, during the course of seventy years, in a vast variety of circumstances, possessed of power, and deprived of it, during peace, and during war: Persons, who profess themselves of one side or other, we meet every hour, in company, in our pleasures, in our serious occupations: We ourselves are constrained, in a manner, to take party; and living in a country of the highest liberty, every one may openly declare all his sentiments and opinions: And yet we are at a loss to tell the nature, pretensions, and principles of the parties. The question is, perhaps, in itself, somewhat difficult; but has been rendered more so, by the prejudice and violence of party.

When we compare the parties of *WHIG* and *TORY*, to those of *ROUND-HEAD* and *CAVALIER*, the most obvious difference, which appears between them, consists in the principles of *passive obedience*, and *indefeasible right*, which were but little heard of among the *CAVALIERS*, but became the universal doctrine, and were esteemed the true characteristic of a *TORY*. Were these principles pushed into their most obvious consequences, they imply a formal renunciation of all our liberties, and an avowal of absolute monarchy; since nothing can be a greater absurdity than a limited power, which must not be resisted, even when it exceeds its limitations. But as the most rational principles are often but a weak counterpoise to passion; 'tis no wonder that these absurd principles, *sufficient*, according

according to a celebrated author \*, *to shock the common sense of a HOTTENTOT or SAMOIEDE*, were found too weak for that effect. The TORIES, as men, were enemies to oppression; and also as ENGLISHMEN, they were enemies to arbitrary power. Their zeal for liberty was, perhaps, less fervent than that of their antagonists; but was sufficient to make them forget all their general principles, when they saw themselves openly threatened with a subversion of the antient government. From these sentiments arose the *revolution*; an event of mighty consequence, and the firmest foundation of BRITISH liberty. The conduct of the TORIES, during that event, and after it, will afford us a true insight into the nature of that party.

In the *first* place, They appear to have had the sentiments of true BRITONS in their affections to liberty, and in their determined resolution not to sacrifice it to any abstract principles whatsoever, or to any imaginary rights of princes. This part of their character might justly have been doubted of before the *revolution*, from the obvious tendency of their avowed principles, and from their great compliances with a court, which made little secret of its arbitrary designs. The *revolution* shewed them to have been, in this respect, nothing but a genuine *court-party*, such as might be expected in a BRITISH government: That is, *Lovers of liberty, but greater lovers of monarchy*. It must, however, be confessed, that they carried their monarchical principles further, even in practice, but more so in theory, than was, in any degree, consistent with a limited government.

\* Dissertation on Parties, Letter 2d.



*Secondly*, Neither their principles nor affections concurred, entirely or heartily, with the settlement made at the *revolution*, or with that which has since taken place. This part of their character may seem contradictory to the former; since any other settlement, in those circumstances of the nation, must probably have been dangerous, if not fatal to liberty. But the heart of man is made to reconcile contradictions; and this contradiction is not greater than that betwixt *passive obedience*, and the *resistance* employed at the *revolution*. A *TORY*, therefore, since the *revolution*, may be defined in a few words, to be a lover of monarchy, though without abandoning liberty; and a partizan of the family of *STUART*. As a *WHIG* may be defined to be a lover of liberty, though without renouncing monarchy; and a friend to the settlement in the *PROTESTANT* line\*.

These

\* The author above cited has asserted, that the *REAL* distinction betwixt *WHIG* and *TORY* was lost at the *revolution*, and that ever since they have continued to be mere *personal* parties, like the *GUELF*s and *GIBBELINE*s, after the emperors had lost all authority in *ITALY*. Such an opinion, were it received, would turn our whole history into an enigma.

I shall first mention, as a proof of a real distinction between these parties, what every one may have observed or heard concerning the conduct and conversation of all his friends and acquaintance on both sides. Have not the *TORIES* always borne an avowed affection to the family of *STUART*, and have not their adversaries always opposed with vigour the succession of that family?

The *TORY* principles are confessedly the most favourable to monarchy. Yet the *TORIES* have almost always opposed the court these fifty years; nor were they cordial friends to King *WILLIAM*, even when employed by him. Their quarrel, therefore, cannot be supposed to have lain with the throne, but with the person who sat on it.

They concurred heartily with the court during the four last years of Queen *ANNE*. But is any one at a loss to find the reason?

The succession of the crown in the *BRITISH* government is a point of too great consequence to be absolutely indifferent to persons who concern themselves, in any degree,

These different views, with regard to the settlement of the crown, were accidental, but natural additions to the principles of the *court* and *country* parties, which are the genuine parties of the BRITISH government. A passionate lover of monarchy is apt to be displeased at any change of the succession; as favouring too much of a commonwealth; a passionate lover of liberty is apt to think that every part of the government ought to be subordinate to the interests of liberty. 'Tis however remarkable, that though the principles of WHIG and TORY were both of them of a compound nature; yet the ingredients, which predominated in both, were not correspondent to each other. A TORY loved monarchy, and bore an affection to the family of STUART; but the latter affection was the predominant inclination of the party. A WHIG loved liberty, and was a friend to the settlement in the PROTESTANT line; but the love of liberty was professedly his predominant inclination. The TORIES have frequently acted as

degree, about the fortune of the public; much less can it be supposed that the TORY party, who never valued themselves upon moderation, could maintain a *stoical* indifference in a point of such importance. Were they, therefore, zealous for the house of HANOVER? Or was there any thing that kept an opposite zeal from openly appearing, if it did not openly appear, but prudence, and a sense of decency?

'Tis monstrous to see an established episcopal clergy in declared opposition to the court, and a non-conformist presbyterian clergy in conjunction with it. What could have produced such an unnatural conduct in both? Nothing, but that the former, espoused monarchical principles too high for the present settlement, which is founded on principles of liberty: And the latter, being afraid of the prevalence of those high principles, adhered to that party from whom they had reason to expect liberty and toleration.

The different conduct of the two parties, with regard to foreign politics, is also a proof to the same purpose. HOLLAND has always been most favoured by one, and FRANCE by the other. In short, the proofs of this kind seem so palpable and evident, that it is almost needless to collect them.



republicans, where either policy or revenge has engaged them to that conduct; and there was no one of that party, who, upon the supposition, that he was to be disappointed in his views with regard to the succession, would not have desired to impose the strictest limitations on the crown, and to bring our form of government as near republican as possible, in order to depress the family, which, according to his apprehension, succeeded without any just title. The WHIGS, 'tis true, have also taken steps dangerous to liberty, under colour of securing the succession and settlement of the crown, according to their views: But as the body of the party had no passion for that succession, otherwise than as the means of securing liberty, they have been betrayed into these steps by ignorance, or frailty, or the interests of their leaders. The succession of the crown was, therefore, the chief point with the TORIES; the security of our liberties with the Whigs. Nor is this seeming irregularity at all difficult to be accounted for, by our present theory. *Court* and *country* parties are the true parents of TORY and WHIG. But it is almost impossible, that the attachment of the *court* party to monarchy should not degenerate into an attachment to the monarch; there being so close a connexion between them, and the latter being so much the more natural object. How easily does the worship of the divinity degenerate into a worship of the idol? The connexion is not so great between liberty, the divinity of the old *country* party or WHIGS, and any monarch or royal family; nor is it so reasonable to suppose, that in that party, the worship can be so easily transferred from the one to the other. Though even that would be no great miracle.

'Tis difficult to penetrate into the thoughts and sentiments of any particular man; but 'tis almost impossible to distinguish those of a whole party, where it often happens, that no two persons agree precisely in the same maxims of conduct. Yet I will venture to affirm, that it was not so much PRINCIPLE, or an opinion of indefeasible right, which attached the TORIES to the ancient royal family, as AFFECTION, or a certain love and esteem for their persons. The same cause divided ENGLAND formerly between the houses of YORK and LANCASTER, and SCOTLAND between the families of BRUCE and BALIOL; in an age, when political disputes were but little in fashion, and when political *principles* must of course have had but little influence on mankind. The doctrine of passive obedience, in its rigid sense, is so absurd in itself, and so opposite to our liberties, that it seems to have been chiefly left to pulpit-declainers, and to their deluded followers among the vulgar. Men of better sense were guided by *affection*; and as to the leaders of this party, 'tis probable, that *interest* was their chief motive, and that they acted more contrary to their private sentiments, than the leaders of the opposite party. Though 'tis almost impossible to maintain with zeal the right of any person or family, without acquiring a good-will to them, and changing the *principle* into *affection*; yet is this less natural to people of an elevated station, and liberal education, who have had full opportunity of observing the weakness, folly, and arrogance of monarchs, and have found them to be nothing superior, if not rather inferior to the rest of mankind. The *interest*, therefore, of being heads of a party, does often, with such people, supply the place both of *principle* and *affection*.

Some,



Some, who will not venture to assert, that the *real* difference between WHIG and TORY was lost at the *revolution*, seem inclined to think, that the difference is now abolished, and that affairs are so far returned to their natural state, that there are at present no other parties amongst us but *court* and *country*; that is, men, who by interest or principle are attached either to monarchy or to liberty. It must, indeed, be confessed, that the TORY party seem, of late, to have decayed much in their numbers; still more in their zeal; and I may venture to say, still more in their credit and authority. The TORIES have been so long obliged to talk in the republican stile, that they seem to have made converts of themselves by their hypocrisy, and to have embraced the sentiments, as well as language of their adversaries. There are, however, very considerable remains of that party in ENGLAND, with all their old prejudices; and a proof that *court* and *country* are not our only parties, is, that almost all the dissenters side with the court, and the lower clergy, at least, of the church of ENGLAND, with the opposition. This may convince us, that some bias still hangs upon our constitution, some extrinsic weight, which turns it from its natural course, and causes a confusion in our parties.

I shall conclude this subject with observing that we never had any TORIES in SCOTLAND, according to the proper signification of the word, and that the division of parties in this country was really into WHIGS and JACOBITES. A JACOBITE seems to be a TORY, who has no regard to the constitution, but is either a zealous partizan of absolute monarchy, or at least willing to sacrifice our liberties to the obtaining the succession in that family to which he is attached. The reason of the difference between ENGLAND and SCOTLAND, I take to be this:

this: Political and religious divisions in the latter country, have been, since the *revolution*, regularly correspondent to each other. The PRESBYTERIANS were all WHIGS without exception: Those who favoured *episcopacy*, of the opposite party. And as the clergy of the latter sect were turned out of the churches at the *revolution*, they had no motive for making any compliances with the government in their oaths, or their forms of prayers, but openly avowed the highest principles of their party; which is the cause why their followers have been more violent than their brethren of the TORY party in ENGLAND\*.

\* Some of the opinions, delivered in these Essays, with regard to the public transactions in the last century, the Author, on more accurate examination, found reason to retract in his *History of GREAT BRITAIN*. And as he would not enslave himself to the systems of either party, neither would he fetter his judgment by his own preconceived opinions and principles; nor is he ashamed to acknowledge his mistakes.



## E S S A Y IX.

## OF SUPERSTITION AND ENTHUSIASM.

*THAT* the corruption of the best things produces the worst, is grown into a maxim, and is commonly proved, among other instances, by the pernicious effects of *superstition* and *enthusiasm*, the corruptions of true religion.

These two species of false religion, though both pernicious, are yet of a very different, and even of a contrary nature. The mind of man is subject to certain unaccountable terrors and apprehensions, proceeding either from the unhappy situation of private or public affairs, from ill health, from a gloomy and melancholy disposition, or from the concurrence of all these circumstances. In such a state of mind, infinite unknown evils are dreaded from unknown agents; and where real objects of terror are wanting, the soul, active to its own prejudice, and fostering its predominant inclination, finds imaginary ones, to whose power and malevolence it sets no limits. As these enemies are entirely invisible and unknown, the methods taken to appease them are equally unaccountable, and consist in ceremonies, observances, mortifications, sacrifices, presents, or in any practice, however absurd or frivolous, which either folly or knavery recommends to a blind and terrified credulity. Weakness, fear, melancholy, together with ignorance, are, therefore, the true sources of *SUPERSTITION*.

But

But the mind of man is also subject to an unaccountable elevation and presumption, proceeding from prosperous success, from luxuriant health, from strong spirits, or from a bold and confident disposition. In such a state of mind, the imagination swells with great, but confused conceptions, to which no sub-lunary beauties or enjoyments can correspond. Every thing mortal and perishable vanishes as unworthy of attention. And a full range is given to the fancy in the invisible regions or world of spirits, where the soul is at liberty to indulge itself in every imagination, which may best suit its present taste and disposition. Hence arise raptures, transports, and surprising flights of fancy; and confidence and presumption still increasing, these raptures, being altogether unaccountable, and seeming quite beyond the reach of our ordinary faculties, are attributed to the immediate inspiration of that Divine Being, who is the object of devotion. In a little time, the inspired person comes to regard himself as the chief favourite of the Divinity; and when this frenzy once takes place, which is the summit of enthusiasm, every whim is consecrated: Human reason, and even morality are rejected as fallacious guides: And the fanatic madman delivers himself over, blindly, without reserve, to the supposed illapses of the spirit, and to inspirations from above. Hope, pride, presumption, a warm imagination, together with ignorance, are, therefore, the true sources of ENTHUSIASM.

These two species of false religion might afford occasion to many speculations; but I shall confine myself, at present, to a few reflections concerning their different influence on government and society.

My first reflection is, *That superstition is favourable to priestly power, and enthusiasm as much or rather more contrary to it, than*



*found reason and philosophy.* As superstition is founded on fear, sorrow, and a depression of spirits, it represents the man to himself in such despicable colours, that he appears unworthy in his own eyes, of approaching the divine presence, and naturally has recourse to any other person, whose sanctity of life, or, perhaps, impudence and cunning, have made him be supposed more favoured by the Divinity. To him the superstitious entrust their devotions: To his care they recommend their prayers, petitions, and sacrifices: And by his means, they hope to render their addresses acceptable to their incensed Deity. Hence the origin of PRIESTS, who may justly be regarded as one of the grossest inventions, of a timorous and abject superstition, which, ever diffident of itself, dares not offer up its own devotions, but ignorantly thinks to recommend itself to the Divinity, by the mediation of his supposed friends and servants. As superstition is a considerable ingredient in almost all religions, even the most fanatical; there being nothing but philosophy able to conquer entirely these unaccountable terrors; hence it proceeds, that in almost every sect of religion there are priests to be found: But the stronger mixture there is of superstition, the higher is the authority of the priesthood. Judaism and Popery, (especially the latter) being the most unphilosophical and absurd superstitions which have yet been known in the world, are the most enslaved by their priests. As the church of ENGLAND may justly be said to retain some mixture of Popish superstition, it partakes also, in its original constitution, of a propensity to priestly power, and dominion; particularly in the respect which it exacts to the sacerdotal character. And though, according to the sentiments of that church, the prayers of the priest must be accompanied with those of the laity; yet

is he the mouth of the congregation, his person is sacred, and without his presence few would think their public devotions, or the sacraments, and other rites, acceptable to the Divinity.

On the other hand, it may be observed, that all enthusiasts have been free from the yoke of ecclesiastics, and have expressed great independence in their devotion; with a contempt of forms, ceremonies and traditions. The *quakers* are the most egregious, though at the same time, the most innocent enthusiasts that have yet been known; and are, perhaps, the only sect, who have never admitted priests amongst them. The *independents*, of all the ENGLISH sectaries, approach nearest to the *quakers* in fanaticism, and in their freedom from priestly bondage. The *presbyterians* follow after, at an equal distance in both these particulars. In short, this observation is founded in the most certain experience; and will also appear to be founded in reason, if we consider, that as enthusiasm arises from a presumptuous pride and confidence, it thinks itself sufficiently qualified to *approach* the Divinity, without any human mediator. Its rapturous devotions are so fervent, that it even imagines itself *actually* to *approach* him by the way of contemplation and inward converse; which makes it neglect all those outward ceremonies and observances, to which the assistance of the priests appears so requisite in the eyes of their superstitious votaries. The fanatic consecrates himself, and bestows on his own person a sacred character, much superior to what forms and ceremonious institutions can confer on any other.

My second reflection with regard to these species of false religion is, that religions, which partake of enthusiasm are, on their first rise, much more furious and violent than those which partake.



*partake of superstition; but in a little time become much more gentle and moderate.* The violence of this species of religion, when excited by novelty, and animated by opposition, appears from numberless instances; of the *anabaptists* in GERMANY, the *camisars* in FRANCE, the *levellers* and other fanatics in ENGLAND, and the *covenanters* in SCOTLAND. Enthusiasm being founded on strong spirits, and a presumptuous boldness of character, it naturally begets the most extreme resolutions; especially after it rises to that height as to inspire the deluded fanatic with the opinion of divine illuminations, and with a contempt for the common rules of reason, morality and prudence.

'Tis thus enthusiasm produces the most cruel desolations in human society; but its fury is like that of thunder and tempest, which exhaust themselves in a little time, and leave the air more calm and serene than before. When the first fire of enthusiasm is spent, men naturally, in all fanatical sects, sink into the greatest remissness and coolness in sacred matters; there being no body of men amongst them, endowed with sufficient authority, whose interest is concerned to support the religious spirit: No rites, no ceremonies, no holy observances, which may enter into the common train of life, and preserve the sacred principles from oblivion. Superstition, on the contrary, steals in gradually and insensibly; renders men tame and submissive; is acceptable to the magistrate, and seems inoffensive to the people: Till at last the priest, having firmly established his authority, becomes the tyrant and disturber of human society, by his endless contentions, persecutions, and religious wars. How smoothly did the ROMISH church advance in her acquisition of power? But into what dismal convulsions did she

the throw all EUROPE, in order to maintain it? On the other hand, our sectaries, who were formerly such dangerous bigots, are now become very free reasoners; and the *quakers* seem to approach nearly the only regular body of *deists* in the universe, the *literati*, or the disciples of CONFUCIUS in CHINA\*.

My *third* observation on this head is, *that superstition is an enemy to civil liberty, and enthusiasm a friend to it.* As superstition groans under the dominion of the priests, and enthusiasm is destructive of all ecclesiastical power, this sufficiently accounts for the present observation. Not to mention, that enthusiasm being the infirmity of bold and ambitious tempers, is naturally accompanied with a spirit of liberty; as superstition, on the contrary, renders men tame and abject, and fits them for slavery. We learn from the ENGLISH history, that, during the civil wars, the *independents* and *deists*, though the most opposite in their religious principles; yet were united in their political ones, and were alike passionate for a commonwealth. And since the origin of *whig* and *tory*, the leaders of the *whigs* have either been *deists* or professed *latitudinarians* in their principles; that is, friends to toleration, and indifferent to any particular sect of *christians*: While the sectaries, who have all a strong tincture of enthusiasm, have always, without exception, concurred with that party, in the defence of civil liberty. The resemblance in their superstitions long united the high-church *tories*, and the *Roman catholics*, in the support of prerogative and kingly power; though experience of the tolerating spirit of the *whigs* seems of late to have reconciled the *catholics* to that party.

\* The CHINESE *Literati* have no priests or ecclesiastical establishment.



The *molinists* and *jansenists* in FRANCE have a thousand unintelligible disputes, which are not worthy the reflection of a man of sense: But what principally distinguishes these two sects, and alone merits attention, is the different spirit of their religion. The *molinists*, conducted by the *jesuites*, are great friends to superstition, rigid observers of external forms and ceremonies, and devoted to the authority of the priests, and to tradition. The *jansenists* are enthusiasts, and zealous promoters of the passionate devotion, and of the inward life; little influenced by authority; and, in a word, but half catholics. The consequences are exactly conformable to the foregoing reasoning. The *jesuites* are the tyrants of the people, and the slaves of the court! And the *jansenists* preserve alive the small sparks of the love of liberty, which are to be found in the FRENCH nation.

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## E S S A Y X.

### OF AVARICE.

**T**IS easy to observe, that comic writers exaggerate every character, and draw their fop, or coward with stronger features than are any where to be met with in nature. This moral kind of painting for the stage has been often compared to the painting for cupolas and cielings, where the colours are over-charged, and every part is drawn exceffively large, and beyond nature. The figures seem monstrous and disproportioned, when seen too nigh; but become natural and regular, when set at a distance, and placed in that point of view, in which they are intended to be surveyed. For a like reason, when characters are exhibited in theatrical representations, the want of reality removes, in a manner, the personages; and rendering them more cold and unentertaining, makes it necessary to compensate, by the force of colouring, what they want in substance. Thus we find in common life, that when a man once allows himself to depart from truth in his narrations, he never can keep within the bounds of probability; but adds still some new circumstance to render his stories more marvellous, and to satisfy his imagination. Two men in buckram suits became eleven to Sir JOHN FALSTAFF before the end of his story.



There is only one vice, which may be found in life with as strong features, and as high a colouring as needs be employed by any satyrift or comic poet; and that is AVARICE. Every day we meet with men of immense fortunes, without heirs, and on the very brink of the grave, who refuse themselves the most common necessaries of life, and go on heaping possessions on possessions, under all the real pressures of the severest poverty. An old usurer, says the story, lying in his last agonies was presented by the priest with the crucifix to worship. He opens his eyes a moment before he expires, considers the crucifix, and cries, *These jewels are not true; I can only lend ten pistoles upon such a pledge.* This was probably the invention of some epigrammatist; and yet every one, from his own experience, may be able to recollect almost as strong instances of perseverance in avarice. 'Tis commonly reported of a famous miser in this city, that finding himself near death, he sent for some of the magistrates, and gave them a bill of an hundred pounds, payable after his decease; which sum he intended should be disposed of in charitable uses; but scarce were they gone, when he orders them to be called back, and offers them ready money, if they would abate five pounds of the sum. Another noted miser in the north, intending to defraud his heirs, and leave his fortune to the building an hospital, protracted the drawing of his will from day to day; and 'tis thought, that if those interested in it had not paid for the drawing it, he had died intestate. In short, none of the most furious excesses of love and ambition are in any respect to be compared to the extremes of avarice.

The best excuse that can be made for avarice is, that it generally prevails in old men, or in men of cold tempers, where

all

all the other affections are extinct; and the mind being incapable of remaining without some passion or pursuit, at last finds out this monstrously absurd one, which suits the coldness and inactivity of its temper. At the same time, it seems very extraordinary, that so frosty, spiritless a passion should be able to carry us farther than all the warmth of youth and pleasure. but if we look more narrowly into the matter, we shall find, that this very circumstance renders the explication of the case more easy. When the temper is warm and full of vigour, it naturally shoots out more ways than one, and produces inferior passions to counter-balance, in some degree, its predominant inclination. 'Tis impossible for a person of that temper, however bent on any pursuit, to be deprived of all sense of shame, or all regard to the sentiments of mankind. His friends must have some influence over him: And other considerations are apt to have their weight. All this serves to restrain him within some bounds. But 'tis no wonder that the avaritious man, being, from the coldness of his temper, without regard to reputation, to friendship, or to pleasure, should be carried so far by his prevailing inclination, and should display his passion in such surprizing instances.

Accordingly we find no vice so irreclaimable as avarice: And though there scarcely has been a moralist or philosopher, from the beginning of the world to this day, who has not levelled a stroke at it, we hardly find a single instance of any person's being cured of it. For this reason, I am more apt to approve of those, who attack it with wit and humour, than of those who treat it in a serious manner. There being so little hopes of doing good to the people infected with this vice, I would have the rest of mankind, at least, diverted by our manner of



exposing it: As indeed there is no kind of diversion, of which they seem so willing to partake,

Among the fables of *Monsieur de la MOTTE*, there is one levelled against avarice, which seems to me more natural and easy, than most of the fables of that ingenious author. A miser, says he, being dead, and fairly interred, came to the banks of the STYX, desiring to be ferried over along with the other ghosts. CHARON demands his fare, and is surprized to see the miser, rather than pay it, throw himself into the river, and swim over to the other side, notwithstanding all the clamour and opposition that could be made to him. All hell was in an uproar; and each of the judges was meditating some punishment, suitable to a crime of such dangerous consequence to the infernal revenues. Shall he be chained to the rock with PROMETHEUS? Or tremble below the precipice in company with the DANAIDES? Or assist SISYPHUS in rolling his stone? No, says MINOS, none of these. We must invent some severer punishment. Let him be sent back to the earth, to see the use his heirs are making of his riches.

I hope it will not be interpreted as a design of setting myself in opposition to this celebrated author, if I proceed to deliver a fable of my own, which is intended to expose the same vice of avarice. The hint of it was taken from these lines of Mr. POPE.

*Damn'd to the mines, an equal fate betides  
The slave that digs it, and the slave that hides.*

Our old mother Earth once lodged an indictment against AVARICE before the courts of heaven, for her wicked and malicious council

council and advice, in tempting, inducing, persuading, and traiterously seducing the children of the plaintiff to commit the detestable crime of parricide upon her, and, mangling her body, ranfack her very bowels for hidden treasure. The indictment was very long and verbose; but we must omit a great part of the repetitions and fynonymous terms, not to tire our readers too much with our tale. AVARICE, being called before JUPITER to answer to this charge, had not much to say in her own defence. The injustice was clearly proved upon her. The fact, indeed, was notorious, and the injury had been frequently repeated. When therefore the plaintiff demanded justice, JUPITER very readily gave sentence in her favour; and his decree was to this purpose, That since dame *Avarice*, the defendant, had thus grievously injured dame *Earth*, the plaintiff, she was hereby ordered to take that treasure, of which she had feloniously robbed the said plaintiff, by ranfacking her bosom, and in the same manner, as before, opening her bosom, restore it back to her, without diminution or retention. From this sentence, it shall follow, says JUPITER to the by-standers, That, in all future ages, the retainers of *Avarice* shall bury and conceal their riches, and thereby restore to the earth what they took from her.



## E S S A Y XI.

## OF THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

THERE are certain sects, which secretly form themselves in the learned world, as well as in the political; and though sometimes they come not to an open rupture, yet they give a different turn to the ways of thinking of those who have taken party on either side. The most remarkable of this kind are the sects, that are founded on the different sentiments with regard to the *dignity of human nature*; which is a point that seems to have divided philosophers and poets, as well as divines, from the beginning of the world to this day. Some exalt our species to the skies, and represent man as a kind of human demi-god, who derives his origin from heaven, and retains evident marks of his lineage and descent. Others insist upon the blind sides of human nature, and can discover nothing, except vanity, in which man surpasses the other animals, whom he affects so much to despise. If an author possesses the talent of rhetoric, and declamation, he commonly takes party with the former: If his turn lies towards irony and ridicule, he naturally throws himself into the other extreme.

I am far from thinking, that all those, who have depreciated human nature have been enemies to virtue, and have exposed

the frailties of their fellow creatures with any bad intention. On the contrary, I am sensible, that a very delicate sense of morals, especially when attended with somewhat of the *Misanthrope*, is apt to give a man a disgust of the world, and to make him consider the common course of human affairs with too much spleen and indignation, I must, however, be of opinion, that the sentiments of those, who are inclined to think favourably of mankind, are much more advantageous to virtue, than the contrary principles which give us a mean opinion of our nature. When a man is possessed of a high notion of his rank and character in the creation, he will naturally endeavour to act up to it, and will scorn to do a base or vicious action, which might sink him below that figure which he makes in his own imagination. Accordingly we find, that all our polite and fashionable moralists insist upon this topic, and endeavour to represent vice as unworthy of man, as well as odious in itself.

Women are generally much more flattered in their youth than men; which may proceed from this reason, among others, that their chief point of honour is considered as much more difficult than ours, and requires to be supported by all that decent pride, which can be instilled into them.

We find very few disputes which are not founded on some ambiguity in the expression; and I am persuaded, that the present dispute concerning the dignity of human nature, is not more exempt from it than any other. It may, therefore, be worth while to consider, what is real, and what is only verbal in this controversy.

That there is a natural difference between merit and demerit, virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, no reasonable man will deny:



deny: but yet 'tis evident, that in affixing the term, which denotes either our approbation or blame, we are commonly more influenced by comparison than by any fixt unalterable standard in the nature of things. In like manner, quantity and extension, and bulk, are by every one acknowledged to be real things: But when we call any animal *great* or *little*, we always form a secret comparison between that animal and others of the same species; and 'tis that comparison which regulates our judgment concerning its greatness. A dog and a horse may be of the very same size, while the one is admired for the greatness of its bulk, and the other for the smallness. When I am present, therefore, at any dispute, I always consider with myself, whether it be a question of comparison or not that is the subject of the controversy; and if it be, whether the disputants compare the same objects together, or talk of things that are widely different. As the latter is commonly the case, I have long since learnt to neglect such disputes as manifest abuses of leisure, the most valuable present that could be made to mortals.

In forming our notions of human nature, we are very apt to make a comparison between men and animals which are the only creatures endowed with thought that fall under our senses. Certainly this comparison is very favourable to mankind. On the one hand we see a creature, whose thoughts are not limited by any narrow bounds, either of place or time; who carries his researches into the most distant regions of this globe, and beyond this globe, to the planets and heavenly bodies; looks backward to consider the first origin, at least, the History of human race; casts his eyes forward to see the influence of his  
 5 actions

actions upon posterity, and the judgments which will be formed of his character a thousand years hence; a creature, who traces causes and effects to a great length and intricacy; extracts general principles from particular appearances; improves upon his discoveries; corrects his mistakes; and makes his very errors profitable. On the other hand, we are presented with a creature the very reverse of this; limited in its observations and reasonings to a very few sensible objects which surround it; without curiosity, without foresight; blindly conducted by instinct, and attaining in a very short time, its utmost perfection, beyond which it is never able to advance a single step. What a wide difference is here between these creatures! And how exalted a notion must we entertain of the former, in comparison of the latter!

There are two means commonly employed to destroy this conclusion: *First*, By making an unfair representation of the case, and insisting only upon the weaknesses of human nature. And *secondly*, By forming a new and secret comparison between man and beings of the most perfect wisdom. Among the other excellencies of man, this is remarkable, that he can form an idea of perfection much beyond what he has experience of in himself; and is not limited in his conception of wisdom and virtue. He can easily exalt his notions and conceive a degree of knowledge, which, when compared to his own, will make the latter appear very contemptible, and will cause the difference between that and the sagacity of animals, in a manner, to disappear and vanish. Now this being a point, in which all the world is agreed, that human understanding falls infinitely short of perfect wisdom; 'tis proper we should know when this comparison takes place, that we may not dispute, where there



is no real difference in our sentiments. Man falls much more short of perfect wisdom, and even of his own ideas of perfect wisdom, than animals do of man; but yet the latter difference is so considerable, that nothing but a comparison with the former, can make it appear of little moment.

'Tis also very usual to *compare* one man with another; and finding very few whom we can call *wise* or *virtuous*, we are apt to entertain a contemptible notion of our species in general. That we may be sensible of the fallacy of this way of reasoning, we may observe, that the honourable appellations of *wise* and *virtuous*, are not annexed to any particular degree of those qualities of *wisdom* and *virtue*; but arise altogether from the comparison we make between one man and another. When we find a man, who arrives at such a pitch of wisdom as is very uncommon, we pronounce him a wise man: So that to say, there are few wise men in the world, is really to say nothing; since 'tis only by their scarcity, that they merit that appellation. Were the lowest of our species as wise as TULLY, or my lord BACON, we should still have reason to say, that there are few wise men. For in that case we should exalt our notions of wisdom, and should not pay a singular honour to any one, who was not singularly distinguished by his talents. In like manner, I have heard it observed by thoughtless people, that there are few women possessed of beauty, in comparison of those who want it; not considering, that we bestow the epithet of *beautiful* only on such as possess a degree of beauty, that is common to them with a few. The same degree of beauty in a woman is called deformity, which is treated as real beauty in one of our sex.

As 'tis usual, in forming a notion of our species, to *compare* it with the other species above or below it, or to compare the individuals of the species among themselves; so we often compare together the different motives or actuating principles of human nature, in order to regulate our judgment concerning it. And indeed, this is the only kind of comparison which is worth our attention, or decides any thing in the present question. Were our selfish and vicious principles so much predominant above our social and virtuous, as is asserted by some philosophers, we ought undoubtedly to entertain a contemptible notion of human nature.

There is much of a dispute of words in all this controversy. When a man denies the sincerity of all public spirit or affection to a country and community, I am at a loss what to think of him. Perhaps he never felt this passion in so clear and distinct a manner as to remove all his doubts concerning its force and reality. But when he proceeds afterwards to reject all private friendship, if no interest or self-love intermixes itself; I am then confident that he abuses terms, and confounds the ideas of things; since it is impossible for any one to be so selfish, or rather so stupid, as to make no difference between one man and another, and give no preference to qualities, which engage his approbation and esteem. Is he also, say I, as insensible to anger as he pretends to be to friendship? And does injury and wrong no more affect him than kindness or benefits? Impossible: He does not know himself: He has forgot the movements of his mind; or rather he makes use of a different language from the rest of his countrymen, and calls not things by their proper names. What say you of natural affection? (I subjoin) Is that also a species of self-love? Yes: All is self-love. *Your chil-*



dren are loved only because they are yours: *Your* friend for a like reason: And *your* country engages you only so far as it has a connexion with *yourself*: Were the idea of self removed, nothing would affect you: You would be altogether inactive and insensible: Or if you ever gave yourself any movement, it would only be from vanity, and a desire of fame and reputation to this same self. I am willing, reply I, to receive your interpretation of human actions, provided you admit the facts. That species of self-love, which displays itself in kindness to others, you must allow to have great influence, and even greater, on many occasions, than that which remains in its original shape and form. For how few are there, who, having a family, children, and relations, do not spend more on the maintenance and education of these than on their own pleasures? This, indeed, you justly observe, may proceed from their self-love, since the prosperity of their family and friends is one, or the chief of their pleasures, as well as their chief honour. Be you also one of these selfish men, and you are sure of every one's good opinion and good will; or not to shock your nice ears with these expressions, the self-love of every one, and mine amongst the rest, will then incline us to serve you, and speak well of you.

In my opinion, there are two things which have led astray those philosophers, who have insisted so much on the selfishness of man. In the *first* place, they found, that every act of virtue or friendship was attended with a secret pleasure: from whence they concluded, that friendship and virtue could not be disinterested. But the fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous sentiment or passion produces the pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend, because

because I love him ; but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure.

In the *second* place, it has always been found, that the virtuous are far from being indifferent to praise ; and therefore they have been represented as a set of vain-glorious men, who had nothing in view but the applauses of others. But this also is a fallacy. 'Tis very unjust in the world, when they find any tincture of vanity in a laudable action, to depreciate it upon that account, or ascribe it entirely to that motive. The case is not the same with vanity, as with other passions. Where avarice or revenge enters into any seemingly virtuous action 'tis difficult for us to determine how far it enters, and 'tis natural to suppose it the sole actuating principle. But vanity is so closely allied to virtue, and to love the fame of laudable actions approaches so near the love of laudable actions for their own sake, that these passions are more capable of mixture, than any other kinds of affection ; and 'tis almost impossible to have the latter without some degree of the former. Accordingly we find, that this passion for glory is always warped and varied according to the particular taste or sentiment of the mind on which it falls. NERO had the same vanity in driving a chariot, that TRAJAN had in governing the empire with justice and ability. To love the glory of virtuous actions is a sure proof of the love of virtuous actions.



## E S S A Y XII.

## OF CIVIL LIBERTY.

THOSE who employ their pens on political subjects, free from party-rage, and party-prejudices, cultivate a science, which, of all others, contributes most to public utility, and even to the private satisfaction of those who addict themselves to the study of it. I am apt, however, to entertain a suspicion, that the world is still too young to fix many general truths in politics, which will remain true to the latest posterity. We have not as yet had experience of three thousand years; so that not only the art of reasoning is still defective in this science, as in all others, but we even want sufficient materials upon which we can reason. 'Tis not fully known, what degrees of refinement, either in virtue or vice, human nature is susceptible of; nor what may be expected of mankind from any great revolution in their education, customs or principles. MACHIAVEL was certainly a great genius; but having confined his study to the furious and tyrannical governments of ancient times, or to the little disorderly principalities of ITALY, his reasonings, especially upon monarchical government, have been found extremely defective; and there scarce is any maxim in his *prince*, which subsequent experience has not entirely refuted. *A weak prince, says he, is incapable of receiving good counsel; for if he consult*

*consult with several, he will not be able to choose among their different counsels. If he abandon himself to one, that minister may, perhaps, have capacity; but he will not be long a minister: He will be sure to dispossess his master, and place himself and his family upon the throne.* I mention this, among innumerable instances of the errors of that politician, proceeding, in a great measure, from his having lived in too early an age of the world, to be a good judge of political truth. Almost all the princes of EUROPE are at present governed by their ministers; and have been so for near two centuries; and yet no such event has ever happened, or can possibly happen. SEJANUS might project dethroning the CÆSARS; but FLEURY, though ever so vicious, could not, while in his senses, entertain the least hopes of dispossessing the BOURBONS.

Trade was never esteemed an affair of state, 'till the last century; and there scarcely is any ancient writer on politics, who has made mention of it†. Even the ITALIANS have kept a profound silence with regard to it; though it has now excited the chief attention, as well of ministers of state, as of speculative reasoners. The great opulence, grandeur, and military achievements of the two maritime powers, seem first to have instructed mankind in the vast importance of an extensive commerce.

Having, therefore, intended in this essay to have made a full comparison of civil liberty and absolute government, and to have shewn the great advantages of the former above the latter; I

† XENOPHON mentions it; but with a doubt if it be of any advantage to a state. Εἶδε καὶ ἐμπορία οφείλει τι πόλιν, &c. XEN. HIERO. PLATO totally excludes it from his imaginary republic. De legibus, lib. 4.



began to entertain a suspicion, that no man in this age was sufficiently qualified for such an undertaking; and that whatever any one should advance on that head would, in all probability, be refuted by further experience, and be rejected by posterity. Such mighty revolutions have happened in human affairs, and so many events have arisen contrary to the expectation of the ancients, that they are sufficient to beget the suspicion of still further changes.

It had been observed by the ancients, that all the arts and sciences arose among free nations; and, that the PERSIANS and EGYPTIANS, notwithstanding their ease, opulence and luxury, made but faint efforts towards a relish in those finer pleasures, which were carried to such perfection by the GREEKS, amidst continual wars, attended with poverty, and the greatest simplicity of life and manners. It had also been observed, that as the GREEKS lost their liberty, though they increased mightily in riches, by the conquests of ALEXANDER; yet the arts, from that moment, declined among them, and have never since been able to raise their head in that climate. Learning was transplanted to ROME, the only free nation at that time in the universe; and having met with so favourable a soil, it made prodigious shoots for above a century; till the decay of liberty produced also the decay of letters, and spread a total barbarism over the world. From these two experiments, of which each was double in its kind, and shewed the fall of learning in despotic governments, as well as its rise in popular ones, LONGINUS thought himself sufficiently justified, in asserting, that the arts and sciences could never flourish, but in a free government: and in this opinion, he has been followed by several eminent

eminent writers † in our own country, who either confined their view merely to ancient facts, or entertained too great a partiality in favour of that form of government, which is established amongst us.

But what would these writers have said, to the instances of modern ROME and of FLORENCE? Of which the former carried to perfection all the finer arts of sculpture, painting and music, as well as poetry, though it groaned under tyranny, and under the tyranny of priests: While the latter made the greatest progress in the arts and sciences, after it began to lose its liberty by the usurpations of the family of MEDICIS. ARIOSTO, TASSO, GALILEO, no more than RAPHAEL, and MICHAEL ANGELO, were not born in republics. And though the LOMBARD school was famous as well as the ROMAN, yet the VENETIANS have had the smallest share in its honours, and seem rather inferior to the other ITALIANS, in their genius for the arts and sciences. RUBENS established his school at ANTWERP, not at AMSTERDAM: DRESDEN, not HAMBURGH, is the centre of politeness in GERMANY.

But the most eminent instance of the flourishing of learning in absolute governments, is that of FRANCE, which scarce ever enjoyed any established liberty, and yet has carried the arts and sciences as near perfection as any other nation. The ENGLISH are, perhaps, better philosophers\*; the ITALIANS better painters and musicians; the ROMANS were greater orators: But the FRENCH are the only people, except the GREEKS, who have been at once philosophers, poets, orators, historians,

† Mr. ADDISON and lord SHAFTESBURY.

\* N. B. This was published in 1742.



painters, architects, sculptors, and musicians. With regard to the stage, they have excelled even the GREEKS, who have far excelled the ENGLISH. And, in common life, they have, in a great measure, perfected that art, the most useful and agreeable of any, *l'Art de Vivre*, the art of society and conversation.

If we consider the state of the sciences and polite arts in our own country, HORACE's observation, with regard to the ROMANS, may, in a great measure, be applied to the BRITISH.

—*Sed in longum tamen ævum  
Manferunt, hodieque manent vestigia ruris.*

The elegance and propriety of style have been very much neglected among us. We have no dictionary of our language, and scarce a tolerable grammar. The first polite prose we have, was wrote by a man who is still alive \*. As to SPRAT, LOCKE, and even TEMPLE, they knew too little of the rules of art to be esteemed very elegant writers. The prose of BACON, HARRINGTON, and MILTON, is altogether stiff and pedantic; though their sense be excellent. Men, in this country, have been so much occupied in the great disputes of *Religion*, *Politics* and *Philosophy*, that they had no relish for the seemingly minute observations of grammar and criticism. And though this turn of thinking must have considerably improved our sense and our talent of reasoning; it must be confessed, that even in those sciences above-mentioned, we have not any standard-book, which we can transmit to posterity: And the utmost we have to boast of, are a few essays towards a more just

\* Dr. SWIFT.

philosophy; which, indeed, promise somewhat, but have not, as yet, reached any degree of perfection.

It has become an established opinion, that commerce can never flourish but in a free government; and this opinion seems to be founded on a longer and larger experience than the foregoing, with regard to the arts and sciences. If we trace commerce in its progress through TYRE, ATHENS, SYRACUSE, CARTHAGE, VENICE, FLORENCE, GENOA, ANTWERP, HOLLAND, ENGLAND, &c. we shall always find it to have fixed its seat in free governments. The three greatest trading towns now in EUROPE, are LONDON, AMSTERDAM, and HAMBURGH; all free cities, and protestant cities; that is, enjoying a double liberty. It must, however, be observed, that the great jealousy entertained of late, with regard to the commerce of FRANCE, seems to prove, that this maxim is no more certain and infallible, than the foregoing, and that the subjects of an absolute prince may become our rivals in commerce, as well as in learning.

Durst I deliver my opinion in an affair of so much uncertainty, I would assert, that, notwithstanding the efforts of the FRENCH, there is something hurtful to commerce inherent in the very nature of absolute government, and inseparable from it: Though the reason I would assign for this opinion, is somewhat different from that which is commonly insisted on. Private property seems almost as secure in a civilized EUROPEAN monarchy, as in a republic; nor is danger much apprehended in such a government, from the violence of the sovereign; more than we commonly dread harm from thunder, or earthquakes, or any accident the most unusual and extraordinary. Avarice,



the spur of industry, is so obstinate a passion, and works its way through so many real dangers and difficulties, that 'tis not likely it will be scared by an imaginary danger, which is so small, that it scarce admits of calculation. Commerce, therefore, in my opinion, is apt to decay in absolute governments, not because it is there less *secure*, but because it is less *honourable*. A subordination of ranks is necessary to the support of monarchy. Birth, titles, and place, must be honoured above industry and riches. And while these notions prevail, all the considerable traders will be tempted to throw up their commerce, in order to purchase some of those employments, to which privileges and honours are annexed.

Since I am upon this head of the alterations which time has produced, or may produce in politics, I must observe, that all kinds of government, free and absolute, seem to have undergone, in modern times, a great change to the better, with regard both to foreign and domestic management. The *balance of power* is a secret in politics, fully known only to the present age; and I must add, that the internal POLICE of the state has also received great improvements within this century. We are informed by SALLUST, that CATILINE's army was much augmented by the accession of the highwaymen about ROME; though I believe, that all of that profession, who are at present dispersed over EUROPE, would not amount to a regiment. In CICERO's pleadings for MILO, I find this argument, among others, made use of to prove, that his client had not assassinated CLODIUS. Had MILO, said he, intended to have killed CLODIUS, he had not attacked him in the day-time, and at such a distance from the city: He had way-laid him at night, near the suburbs, where it might have been pretended, that he

was

was killed by robbers; and the frequency of the accident would have favoured the deceit. This is a surprizing proof of the loose police of ROME, and of the number and force of these robbers; since CLODIUS \* was at that time attended with thirty slaves, who were compleatly armed, and sufficiently accustomed to blood and danger in the frequent tumults excited by that seditious tribune.

But though all kinds of government be improved in modern times, yet monarchical government seems to have made the greatest advances towards perfection. It may now be affirmed of civilized monarchies, what was formerly said in praise of republics alone, *that they are a government of Laws, not of men.* They are found susceptible of order, method, and constancy, to a surprizing degree. Property is there secure; industry encouraged; the arts flourish; and the prince lives secure among his subjects, like a father among his children. There are perhaps, and have been for two centuries, near two hundred absolute princes, great and small, in EUROPE; and allowing twenty years to each reign, we may suppose, that there have been in the whole two thousand monarchs or tyrants, as the GREEKS would have called them: Yet of these there has not been one, not even PHILIP II. of Spain, so bad as TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, NERO, or DOMITIAN, who were four in twelve amongst the ROMAN emperors. It must, however, be confessed, that though monarchical governments have approached nearer to popular ones, in gentleness and stability; they are still inferior. Our modern education and customs instil more humanity and moderation than the ancient; but have not

\* *Vide Asc. Ped. in Orat. pro Milone.*



as yet been able to overcome entirely the disadvantages of that form of government.

But here I must beg leave to advance a conjecture, which seems very probable, but which posterity alone can fully judge of. I am apt to think, that in monarchical governments there is a source of improvement, and in popular governments a source of degeneracy, which in time will bring these species of government still nearer in equality. The greatest abuses which arise in FRANCE, the most perfect model of pure monarchy, proceed not from the number or weight of the taxes, beyond what are to be met with in free countries; but from the expensive, unequal, arbitrary, and intricate method of levying them, by which the industry of the poor, especially of the peasants and farmers, is, in a great measure, discouraged, and agriculture rendered a beggarly and slavish employment. But to whose advantage do these abuses tend? If to that of the nobility, they might be esteemed inherent in that form of government; since the nobility are the true supports of monarchy; and 'tis natural their interest should be more consulted, in such a constitution, than that of the people. But the nobility are, in reality, the principal losers by this oppression; since it ruins their estates, and beggars their tenants. The only gainers by it are the *Financiers*, a race of men rather odious to the nobility and the whole kingdom. If a prince or minister, therefore, should arise endowed with sufficient discernment to know his own and the public interest, and with sufficient force of mind to break through ancient customs, we might expect to see these abuses remedied; in which case, the difference between their absolute government and our free one, would not appear so considerable as at present.

The

The source of degeneracy, which may be remarked in free governments, consists in the practice of contracting debt, and mortgaging the public revenues, by which taxes may, in time, become altogether intolerable, and all the property of the state be brought into the hands of the public. This practice is of modern date. The ATHENIANS, though governed by a republic, paid near two hundred *per Cent.* for those sums of money, which any emergent occasion made it necessary for them to borrow; as we learn from XENOPHON\*. Among the moderns, the DUTCH first introduced the practice of borrowing great sums at low interest, and have well nigh ruined themselves by it. Absolute princes have also contracted debt; but as an absolute prince may play the bankrupt when he pleases, his people can never be oppressed by his debts. In popular governments, the people, and chiefly those who have the highest offices, being commonly the public creditors, 'tis difficult for the state to make use of this remedy, which, however it may be sometimes necessary, is always cruel and barbarous. This, therefore, seems to be an inconvenience, which nearly threatens all free governments; especially our own, at the present juncture. And what a strong motive is this, to increase our frugality of the public money; lest, for want of it, we be reduced by the multiplicity of taxes, to curse our free government, and wish ourselves in the same state of servitude with all the nations that surround us?

\* Κτήσιν δὲ ἀπ' ἐδενός ἂν ἔτω καλὴν κτήσαντο ὥσπερ ἀφ' ὧ ἀναρβηλέσωσι τίς τὴν ἀφῶρμην.—οἱ δὲ γε πλείους Ἀθηναίων πλείονα λήφονται κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἢ ὅσα ἐν εἰσενέγκουσιν, οἱ γὰρ μὲν ἀνὰ προέλευσαντες, ἐγγυὲς δυοῖν μναῖν πρόσδοτον ἐξέβαι—ὁ δόκει τῶν ἀνδροπίνων ἀσφαλέστατον τε καὶ πόλυχρηστώτατον εἶναι.  
XEN. ΠΟΡΟΙ.



## E S S A Y XIII.

## OF ELOQUENCE.

THOSE, who consider the periods and revolutions of human kind, as represented in history, are entertained with a spectacle full of pleasure and variety, and see, with surprise, the manners, customs, and opinions of the same species susceptible of such prodigious changes in different periods of time. It may, however, be observed, that in *civil* history there is found a much greater uniformity than in the history of learning and science, and that the wars, negotiations, and politics of one age resemble more those of another, than the taste, wit, and speculative principles. Interest and ambition, honour and shame, friendship and enmity, gratitude and revenge, are the prime movers in all public transactions; and these passions are of a very stubborn and intractable nature, in comparison of the sentiments and understanding, which are easily varied by education and example. The GOTHs were much more inferior to the ROMANS, in taste and science, than in courage and virtue.

But not to compare together nations so widely different, that they may almost be esteemed of a different species; it may be observed, that even this latter period of human learning, is in many respects, of an opposite character to the ancient; and  
that

that if we be superior in philosophy, we are still, notwithstanding all our refinements, much inferior in eloquence.

In ancient times, no work of genius was thought to require so great parts and capacity, as the speaking in public; and some eminent writers have pronounced the talents, even of a great poet or philosopher, to be of an inferior nature to those requisite for such an undertaking. GREECE and ROME produced, each of them, but one accomplished orator; and whatever praises the other celebrated speakers might merit, they were still esteemed much inferior to these great models of eloquence. 'Tis observable, that the ancient critics could scarce find two orators in any age, who deserved to be placed precisely in the same rank, and possessed the same degree of merit. CALVUS, CÆLIUS, CURIO, HORTENSIUS, CÆSAR rose one above another: But the greatest of that age was inferior to CICERO, the most eloquent speaker, who had ever appeared in ROME. Those of fine taste, however, pronounced this judgment of the ROMAN orator, as well as of the GRECIAN, that both of them surpassed in eloquence all that had ever appeared, but that they were far from reaching the perfection of their art, which was infinite, and not only exceeded human force to attain, but human imagination to conceive. CICERO declares himself dissatisfied with his own performances; nay, even with those of DEMOSTHENES. *Ita sunt avidæ & capaces meæ aures,* says he, *& semper aliquid immensum, infinitumque desiderant.*

This single circumstance is sufficient to make us apprehend the wide difference between ancient and modern eloquence, and to let us see how much the latter is inferior to the former. Of all the polite and learned nations, BRITAIN alone possesses a



popular government, or admits into the legislature such numerous assemblies as can be supposed to lie under the dominion of eloquence. But what has BRITAIN to boast of in this particular? In enumerating all the great men, who have done honour to our country, we exult in our poets and philosophers; but what orators are ever mentioned? Or where are the monuments of their genius to be met with? There are found, indeed, in our histories, the names of several, who directed the resolutions of our parliament: But neither themselves nor others have taken the pains to preserve their speeches; and the authority which they possessed, seems to have been owing to their experience, wisdom, or power, more than to their talents for oratory. At present, there are above half a dozen speakers in the two houses, who, in the judgment of the public, have reached very near the same pitch of eloquence; and no man pretends to give any one the preference to the rest. This seems to me a certain proof, that none of them have attained much beyond a mediocrity in their art, and that the species of eloquence, which they aspire to, gives no exercise to the sublimer faculties of the mind, but may be reached by ordinary talents and a slight application. A hundred cabinet-makers in LONDON can work a table or a chair equally well; but no one poet can write verses with such spirit and elegance as Mr. POPE.

We are told, that when DEMOSTHENES was to plead, all ingenious men flocked to ATHENS from the most remote parts of GREECE, as to the most celebrated spectacle of the world †.

† Ne illud quidem intelligunt, non modo ita memoriæ proditum esse, sed ita necesse fuisse, cum DEMOSTHENES dicturus esset, ut concursus, audiendi causa, ex tota GRECIA fierent. At cum isti ATTICI dicunt, non modo a corona (quod est ipsum miserabile) sed etiam ab advocatis relinquuntur.

CICERO de Claris Oratoribus.

At

At LONDON you may see men sauntering in the court of requests, while the most important debate is carrying on in the two houses; and many do not think themselves sufficiently compensated, for the losing of their dinners, by all the eloquence of our most celebrated speakers. When old CIBBER is to act, the curiosity of several is more excited, than when our prime minister is to defend himself from a motion for his removal or impeachment.

Even a person unacquainted with the noble remains of ancient orators, may judge, from a few strokes, that the stile or species of their eloquence was infinitely more sublime than that which modern orators aspire to. How absurd would it appear, in our temperate and calm speakers, to make use of an *Apostrophe*, like that noble one of DEMOSTHENES, so much celebrated by QUINTILIAN and LONGINUS, when, justifying the unsuccessful battle of CHÆRONEA, breaks out, *No, my Fellow-citizens, No: You have not erred. I swear by the manes of those heroes, who fought for the same cause in the plains of MARATHON and PLATÆA.* Who could now endure such a bold and poetical figure, as that which CICERO employs, after describing in the most tragical terms the crucifixion of a ROMAN citizen. *Should I paint the horrors of this scene, not to ROMAN citizens, not to the allies of our state, not to those who have ever heard of the ROMAN Name, not even to men, but to brute-creatures; or, to go farther, should I lift up my voice, in the most desolate solitude, to the rocks and mountains, yet should I surely see those rude and inanimate parts of nature moved with horror and indignation at the recital of so enormous an action†.*

With

† *The original is; Quod si hæc non ad cives Romanos, non ad aliquos amicos nostræ civitatis, non ad eos qui populi Romani nomen audissent; denique, si non*



With what a blaze of eloquence must such a sentence be surrounded to give it grace, or cause it to make any impression on the hearers? And what noble art and sublime talents are requisite to arrive, by just degrees, at a sentiment so bold and excessive: To inflame the audience, so as to make them accompany the speaker in such violent passions, and such elevated conceptions: And to conceal, under a torrent of eloquence, the artifice, by which all this is effectuated! Should this sentiment even appear to us excessive, as perhaps it justly may, it may at least serve to give an idea of the style of ancient eloquence, where such swelling expressions were not rejected as wholly monstrous and gigantic.

Suitable to this vehemence of thought and expression, was the vehemence of action, observed in the ancient orators. The *supplodio pedis*, or stamping of the foot, was one of the most usual and moderate gestures which they made use of †; though that is now esteemed too violent, either for the senate, bar, or pulpit, and is only admitted into the theatre, to accompany the most violent passions, which are there represented.

One is somewhat at a loss to what cause we may ascribe so sensible a decline of eloquence in latter ages. The genius of mankind, at all times, is, perhaps, equal: The moderns have

ad homines, verum ad bestias; aut etiam, ut longius progrediar, si in aliqua desertissima solitudine, ad faxa & ad scopulos hæc conqueri & deplorare vellem, tamen omnia muta atque inanima, tanta & tam indigna rerum atrocitate commoverentur.

Cic. in ver.

† Ubi dolor? Ubi ardor animi, qui etiam ex infantium ingeniis elicere voces & querelas solet? nulla perturbatio animi, nulla corporis: frons non percussa, non femur; pedis (*quod minimum est*) nulla supplodio. Itaque tantum absuit ut inflammaret nostros animos; somnum isto loco vix tenebamus. Cicero de Claris Oratoribus.

applied

applied themselves, with great industry and success, to all the other arts and sciences : And one of the most learned nations of the universe possesses a popular government ; a circumstance which seems requisite for the full display of these noble talents : But notwithstanding all these advantages, our progress in eloquence is very inconsiderable, in comparison of the advances, which we have made in all the other parts of learning.

Shall we assert, that the strains of ancient eloquence are unsuitable to our age, and not to be imitated by modern orators ? Whatever reasons may be made use of to prove this, I am persuaded they will be found, upon examination, to be unsound and unsatisfactory.

*First*, It may be said, that in ancient times, during the flourishing period of the GREEK and ROMAN learning, the municipal laws, in every state, were but few and simple, and the decision of causes was, in a great measure, left to the equity and common sense of the judges. The study of the laws was not then a laborious occupation, requiring the drudgery of a whole life to finish it, and utterly incompatible with every other study or profession. The great statesmen and generals among the ROMANS were all lawyers ; and CICERO, to shew the facility of acquiring this science, declares, that in the midst of all his occupations, he would undertake, in a few days, to make himself a compleat civilian. Now, where a pleader addresses himself to the equity of his judges, he has much more room to display his eloquence, than where he must draw his arguments from strict laws, statutes, and precedents. In the former case, many circumstances must be taken in, many personal considerations regarded ; and even favour and inclination, which it belongs to the orator, by his art and eloquence, to conciliate, may  
be



be disguised under the appearance of equity. But how shall a modern lawyer have leisure to quit his toilsome occupations, in order to gather the flowers of PARNASSUS? Or what opportunity shall he have of displaying them, amidst the rigid and subtle arguments, objections, and replies, which he is obliged to make use of? The greatest genius, and greatest orator, who should pretend to plead before the *Chancellor*, after a month's study of the laws, would only labour to make himself ridiculous.

I am ready to own, that this circumstance, of the multiplicity and intricacy of laws, is a discouragement to eloquence in modern times: But I assert, that it will not account entirely for the decline of that noble art. It may banish oratory from WESTMINSTER-HALL, but not from either house of parliament. Among the ATHENIANS, the AREOPAGITES expressly forbid all allurements of eloquence; and some have pretended that in the GREEK orations wrote in the *judiciary* form, there is not such a bold and rhetorical style, as appears in the ROMAN. But to what a pitch did the ATHENIANS carry their eloquence in the *deliberative* kind, when affairs of state were canvassed, and the liberty, happiness, and honour of the republic were the subject of debate? Disputes of this nature elevate the genius above all others, and give the fullest scope to eloquence; and such disputes are very frequent in this nation.

*Secondly*, It may be pretended, that the decline of eloquence is owing to the superior good sense of the moderns, who reject with disdain, all those rhetorical tricks, employed to seduce the judges, and will admit of nothing but solid argument in any debate or deliberation. If a man be accused of murder, the fact

must

must be proved by witnesses and evidence; and the laws will afterwards determine the punishment of the criminal. It would be ridiculous to describe, in strong colours, the horror and cruelty of the action: To introduce the relations of the dead; and, at a signal, make them throw themselves at the feet of the judges, imploring justice with tears and lamentations: And still more ridiculous would it be, to employ a picture representing the bloody deed, in order to move the judges by the display of so tragical a spectacle: Though we know, that this poor artifice was sometimes practised by the pleaders of old \*. Now, banish the pathetic from public discourses, and you reduce the speakers merely to modern eloquence; that is, to good-sense, delivered in proper expressions.

Perhaps it may be acknowledged, that our present customs, or our superior good-sense, if you will, should make our orators more cautious and reserved than the ancient, in attempting to inflame the passions, or elevate the imagination of their audience: But, I see no reason, why it should make them despair absolutely of succeeding in that attempt. It should make them redouble their art, not abandon it intirely. The ancient orators seem also to have been on their guard against this jealousy of their audience; but they took a different way of eluding it †. They hurried away with such a torrent of sublime and pathetic, that they left their hearers no leisure to perceive the artifice, by which they were deceived. Nay, to consider the matter aright, they were not deceived by any artifice. The orator, by the force of his own genius and eloquence, first inflamed himself with anger, indignation, pity, sorrow; and then communicated those impetuous movements to his audience.

\* *QUINTIL.* lib. vi. cap. 1. † *LONGINUS*, cap. 15.



Does any man pretend to have more good sense than JULIUS CÆSAR? Yet that haughty conqueror, we know, was so subdued by the charms of CICERO's eloquence, that he was, in a manner, constrained to change his settled purpose and resolution, and to absolve a criminal, whom, before that orator pleaded, he was determined to condemn.

Some objections, I own, notwithstanding his vast success, may lie against some passages of the ROMAN orator. He is too florid and rhetorical: His figures are too striking and palpable: The Divisions of his Discourse drawn chiefly from the rules of the schools: And his wit disdains not always the artifice even of a pun, rhyme or jingle of words. The GRECIAN addressed himself to an audience much less refined than the ROMAN senate or judges. The lowest vulgar of ATHENS were his sovereigns, and the arbiters of his eloquence\*. Yet is his manner much more chaste and austere than that of the other. Could it be copied, its success would be infallible over a modern assembly. 'Tis rapid harmony, exactly adjusted to the sense: 'Tis vehement reasoning, without any appearance of art: 'Tis disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, involved in a continued stream of argument: And of all human productions, the orations of DEMOSTHENES present to us the models, which approach the nearest to perfection.

\* The orators formed the taste of the ATHENIAN people, not the people of the orators. GORGAS LEONTINUS was very taking with them, till they became acquainted with a better manner. His figures of speech, says DIODORUS SICULUS, his antithesis, his *ισοκλή*, his *ομικτελευτον*, which are now despised, had a great effect upon the audience. Lib. 12. page 106. *ex editione RHOD.* 'Tis in vain therefore for modern orators to plead the taste of their hearers as an apology for their lame performances. It would be strange prejudice in favour of antiquity, not to allow a BRITISH parliament to be naturally superior in judgment and delicacy to an ATHENIAN mob.

Thirdly,

*Thirdly*, It may be pretended, that the disorders of the ancient governments, and the enormous crimes, of which the citizens were often guilty, afforded much ampler matter for eloquence than can be met with among the moderns. Were there no VERRES or CATILINE, there would be no CICERO. But that this reason can have no great influence, is evident. It would be easy to find a PHILIP in modern times; but where shall we find a DEMOSTHENES?

What remains, then, but that we lay the blame on the want of genius, or of judgment in our speakers, who either found themselves incapable of reaching the heights of ancient eloquence, or rejected all such endeavours, as unfuitable to the spirit of modern assemblies? A few successful attempts of this nature might rouse the genius of the nation, excite the emulation of the youth, and accustom our ears to a more sublime and more pathetic elocution, than what we have been hitherto entertained with. There is certainly something accidental in the first rise and the progress of the arts in any nation. I doubt whether a very satisfactory reason can be given, why ancient ROME, though it received all its arts from GREECE, could attain only to a taste or relish of statuary, painting and architecture, without reaching the practice of these noble arts: While modern ROME has been excited, by a few remains found among the ruins of antiquity, and has carried these arts to the greatest perfection. Had such a cultivated genius for oratory, as WALLER's for poetry, arisen, during the civil wars, when liberty began to be fully established, and popular assemblies to enter into all the most material points of government; I am persuaded so illustrious an example would have given a quite different



turn to BRITISH eloquence, and made us reach the perfection of the ancient model. Our orators would then have done honour to their country, as well as our poets and philosophers, and BRITISH CICEROS have appeared as well as BRITISH PLUTARCHS and VIRGILS.

I have confest that there is something accidental in the origin and progress of the arts in any nation; and yet I cannot forbear thinking, that if the other learned and polite nations of EUROPE had possessed the same advantages, of a popular government, they would probably have carried eloquence to a greater height than it has yet reached in BRITAIN. The FRENCH sermons, especially those of FLECHIER and BOSSUET, are much superior to the ENGLISH in this particular; and in both these authors are found many strokes of the most sublime poetry. None but private causes, in that country, are ever debated before their parliaments or courts of judicature; but notwithstanding this disadvantage, there appears a spirit of eloquence in many of their lawyers, which, with proper cultivation and encouragement, might rise to the greatest height. The pleadings of PATRU are very elegant, and give us room to imagine what so fine a genius could have performed in questions concerning public liberty or slavery, peace or war, who exerts himself with such success, in debates concerning the price of an old horse, or a gossiping story of a quarrel between an abbess and her nuns. For 'tis remarkable, that this polite writer, though esteemed by all the men of wit in his time, was never employed in the most considerable causes of their courts of judicature, but lived and died in poverty: From an ancient prejudice industriously propagated by the dunces in all countries, *That a man of genius*

*is unfit for business.* The disorders produced by the factions against cardinal MAZARINE, made the parliament of PARIS enter into the discussion of public affairs, and during that short interval, there appeared many symptoms of the revival of ancient eloquence. The *avocat general* TALON, in an oration, invoked on his knees, the spirit of St. LOUIS to look down with compassion on his divided and unhappy people, and to inspire them, from above, with the love of concord and unanimity \*. The members of the FRENCH academy have attempted to give us models of eloquence in their harangues at their admittance: But, having no subject to discourse upon, they have run altogether into a fulsome strain of panegyric and flattery, the most barren of all subjects. Their style, however, is commonly, on these occasions, very elevated and sublime, and might reach the greatest heights, were it employed on a subject more favourable and engaging.

There are some circumstances, I confess, in the ENGLISH temper and genius, which are disadvantageous to the progress of eloquence, and render all attempts of that kind more dangerous and difficult among them than among any other nation. The ENGLISH are conspicuous for *good-sense*, which makes them very jealous of any attempts to deceive them by the flowers of rhetoric and elocution. They are also peculiarly *modest*; which makes them consider it as a piece of arrogance to offer any thing but reason to public assemblies, or attempt to guide them by passion or fancy. I may, perhaps, be allowed to add, that the people in general are not remarkable for delicacy of taste, or for sensibility to the charms of the muses.

\* De RETZ's Memoirs.



Their *musical parts*, to use the expression of a noble author, are but indifferent. Hence their comic poets, to move them, must have recourse to obscenity; their tragic poets to blood and slaughter: And hence their orators, being deprived of any such resource, have abandoned altogether the hopes of moving them, and have confined themselves to plain argument and reasoning.

These circumstances, joined to particular accidents, may, perhaps, have retarded the growth of eloquence in this kingdom; but will not be able to prevent its success, if ever it appear amongst us: And one may safely pronounce, that this is a field, in which the most flourishing laurels may yet be gathered, if any youth of accomplished genius, thoroughly acquainted with all the polite arts, and not ignorant of public business, should appear in parliament, and accustom our ears to an eloquence more commanding and pathetic. And to confirm me in this opinion, there occur two considerations, the one derived from ancient, the other from modern times.

'Tis seldom or never found, when a false taste in poetry or eloquence prevails among any people, that it has been preferred to a true, upon comparison and reflection. It commonly prevails merely from ignorance of the true, and from the want of perfect models, to lead men into a juster apprehension, and more refined relish of those productions of genius. When *these* appear, they soon unite all suffrages in their favour, and, by their natural and powerful charms, gain over, even the most prejudiced, to the love and admiration of them. The principles of every passion, and of every sentiment, is in every man; and when touched properly, they rise to life, and warm the heart,  
and

and convey that satisfaction by which a work of genius is distinguished from the adulterate beauties of a capricious wit and fancy. And if this observation be true, with regard to all the liberal arts, it must be peculiarly so, with regard to eloquence; which, being merely calculated for the public, and for men of the world, cannot, with any pretence of reason, appeal from the people to more refined judges; but must submit to the public verdict, without reserve or limitation. Whoever, upon comparison, is deemed by a common audience the greatest orator, ought most certainly to be pronounced such, by men of science and erudition. And though an indifferent orator may triumph for a long time, and be esteemed altogether perfect by the vulgar, who are satisfied with his accomplishments, and know not in what he is defective: Yet, whenever the true genius arises, *he* draws to him the attention of every one, and immediately appears superior to his rival.

Now, to judge by this rule, ancient eloquence, that is, the sublime and passionate, is of a much juster taste than the modern, or the argumentative and rational; and, if properly executed, will always have more command and authority over mankind. We are satisfied with our mediocrity, because we have had no experience of any thing better: but the ancients had experience of both, and, upon comparison, gave the preference to that kind, of which they have left us such applauded models. For, if I am not mistaken, our modern eloquence is of the same stile or species with that which ancient critics denominated ATTIC eloquence, that is, calm, elegant and subtle, which instructed the reason more than affected the passions, and never raised its tone above argument or common discourse. Such was the eloquence of LYSIAS among the ATHENIANS,  
and



and of CALVUS among the ROMANS. These were esteemed in their time; but when compared with DEMOSTHENES and CICERO, were eclipsed like a taper when set in the rays of the meridian sun. Those latter orators possessed the same elegance and subtilty, and force of argument, with the former; but what rendered them chiefly admirable, was that pathetic and sublime, which, on proper occasions, they threw into their discourse, and by which they commanded the resolutions of their audience.

Of this species of eloquence we have scarce had any instances in BRITAIN, at least in our public speakers. In our writers, we have had some instances, which have met with great applause, and might assure our ambitious youth of equal or superior glory in attempts for the revival of ancient eloquence. Lord BOLINGBROKE's productions, with all their defects in argument, method, and precision, contain a force and energy, which our orators scarce ever aim at; though 'tis evident, that such an elevated stile has much better grace in a speaker than in a writer, and is assured of more prompt and more astonishing success. 'Tis there seconded by the graces of voice and action: The movements are mutually communicated between the orator and the audience: And the very aspect of a large assembly, attentive to the discourse of one man, must inspire him with a peculiar elevation, sufficient to give a propriety to the strongest figures and expressions. 'Tis true, there is a great prejudice against *set-speeches*; and a man can scarce escape ridicule, who repeats a discourse as a school-boy his lesson, and takes no notice of any thing which has been advanced in the course of the debate. But where is the necessity of falling into this absurdity? A public speaker must know beforehand the  
question

question under debate. He may compose all the arguments, objections, and answers, such as he thinks will be most proper for his discourse \*. If any thing new occur, he may supply it from his invention ; nor will the difference be very apparent between his elaborate and his extemporary compositions. The mind naturally continues with the same *impetus* or *force*, which it has acquired by its motion ; as a vessel, once impelled by the oars, carries on its course for some time, when the original impulse is suspended.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that even though our modern orators should not elevate their stile or aspire to a rivalry with the ancient ; yet there is a material defect in most of their speeches, which they might correct, without departing from that composed air of argument and reasoning, to which they limit their ambition. Their great affectation of extemporary discourses has made them reject all order and method, which seems so requisite to argument, and without which 'tis scarce possible to produce an entire conviction on the mind. 'Tis not, that one would recommend many formal divisions in a public discourse, unless the subject very evidently offer them : But 'tis easy, without this formality, to observe a method, and make that method conspicuous to the hearers, who will be infinitely pleased to see the arguments rise naturally from one another, and will retain a more thorough persuasion, than can arise from the strongest reasons, which are thrown together in confusion.

\* The first of the ATHENIANS, who composed and wrote his speeches, was PERICLES, a man of business and a man of sense, if ever there was one, Περικλέους γραπτὰς λόγους ἐν δημοσίᾳ εἶπε, τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ σχεδιαζόντων. Suidas in Περικλέους.



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## E S S A Y XIV.

### OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

**T**HERE is nothing which requires greater nicety, in our inquiries concerning human affairs, than to distinguish exactly what is owing to *chance*, and what proceeds from *causes*; nor is there any subject, in which an author is more liable to deceive himself by false subtilties and refinements. To say, that any event is derived from chance, cuts short all farther enquiry concerning it, and leaves the writer in the same state of ignorance with the rest of mankind. But when the event is supposed to proceed from certain and stable causes, he may then display his ingenuity, in assigning these causes; and as a man of any subtilty can never be at a loss in this particular, he has thereby an opportunity of swelling his volumes, and discovering his profound knowledge in observing what escapes the vulgar and ignorant.

The distinguishing between chance and causes must depend upon every particular man's sagacity, in considering every particular incident. But, if I were to assign any general rule to help us in applying this distinction, it would be the following, *What depends upon a few persons is, in a great measure, to be ascribed*

*ascribed to chance, or secret and unknown causes: What arises from a great number, may often be accounted for by determinate and known causes.*

There may two very natural reasons be assigned for this rule. *First*, If you suppose a dye to have any bias, however small, to a particular side, this bias, though perhaps it may not appear in a few throws, will certainly prevail in a great number, and will cast the balance entirely to that side. In like manner, when any *causes* beget a particular inclination or passion, at a certain time, and among a certain people; though many individuals may escape the contagion, and be ruled by passions peculiar to themselves; yet the multitude will certainly be infected with the common affection, and be governed by it in all their actions.

*Secondly*, Those principles or causes, which are fitted to operate on a multitude, are always of a grosser and more stubborn nature, less subject to accidents, and less influenced by whim and private fancy, than those which operate on a few only. The latter are commonly so delicate and refined, that the smallest incident in the health, education, or fortune of a particular person, is sufficient to divert their course, and retard their operation; nor is it possible to reduce them to any general maxims or observations. Their influence at one time will never assure us concerning their influence at another; even though all the general circumstances should be the same in both cases.

To judge by this rule, the domestic and the gradual revolutions of a state, must be a more proper subject of reasoning and observation, than the foreign and the violent, which are com-



monly produced by fingle perfons, and are more influenced by whim, folly, or caprice, than by general paffions and interefts. The depreflion of the lords, and rife of the commons in ENGLAND, after the ftatutes of alienation; and the increafe of trade and induftry, are more eafily accounted for by general principles, than the depreflion of the SPANISH, and rife of the FRENCH monarchy, after the death of CHARLES QUINT. Had HARRY IV. Cardinal RICHELIEU, and LOUIS XIV. been SPANIARDS; and PHILIP II. III. and IV. and CHARLES II. been FRENCHMEN, the hiftory of thefe two nations had been entirely reverfed.

For the fame reafon, 'tis more eafy to account for the rife and progrefs of commerce in any kingdom, than for that of learning; and a ftate which fhould apply itfelf to the encouragement of the one, would be much more affured of fuccefs, than one which fhould cultivate the other. Avarice, or the defire of gain, is an univerfal paffion, which operates at all times, in all places, and upon all perfons: But curiofity, or the love of knowledge, has a very limited influence, and requires youth, leifure, education, genius, and example, to make it govern any perfon. You will never want bookfellers, while there are buyers of books: But there may frequently be readers, where there are no authors. Multitudes of people, neceffity and liberty, have begot commerce in HOLLAND: But ftudy and application have fcarce produced any eminent writers.

We may, therefore, conclude, that there is no fubject, in which we muft proceed with more caution, than in tracing the hiftory of the arts and fciences; left we affign caufes which never

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ver existed, and reduce what is merely contingent to stable and universal principles. Those, who cultivate the sciences in any state, are always few in number: The passion, which governs them, limited: Their taste and judgment tender and easily perverted: And their application disturbed with the smallest accident. Chance, therefore, or secret and unknown causes, must have a great influence on the rise and progress of all the refined arts.

But there is a reason, which induces me not to ascribe the matter altogether to chance. Though the persons, who cultivate the sciences with such astonishing success, as to attract the admiration of posterity, be always few, in all nations and all ages; 'tis impossible but a share of the same spirit and genius must be antecedently diffused through the people among whom they arise, in order to produce, form, and cultivate, from their earliest infancy, the taste and judgment of those eminent writers. The mass cannot be altogether insipid, from which such refined spirits are extracted. *There is a God within us*, says OVID, *who breathes that divine air by which we are animated* \*. Poets, in all ages, have advanced this claim to inspiration. There is not, however, any thing supernatural in the case. Their fire is not kindled from heaven. It only runs along the earth; is caught from one breast to another; and burns brightest, where the materials are best prepared, and most happily disposed. The question, therefore, concerning the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, is not altogether a question concerning the taste, genius, and spirit of a few, but concerning those of a whole people; and may, therefore,

\* *Eft Deus in nobis; agitante calefcimus illo:*

*Impetus hic, sacra semina mentis habet.*

OVID, *Fast. Lib. 1.*



be accounted for, in some measure, by general causes and principles. I grant, that a man, who should inquire, why such a particular poet, as HOMER, for instance, existed, at such a place, in such a time, would throw himself headlong into chimæra, and could never treat of such a subject, without a multitude of false subtilties and refinements. He might as well pretend to give a reason, why such particular generals, as FABIVS and SCIPIO, lived in ROME at such a time, and why FABIVS came into the world before SCIPIO. For such incidents as those, no other reason can be given but that of HORACE.

*Scit genius, natale comes, qui temperat astrum,*

*Naturæ Deus humanæ, mortalis in unum——*

*——Quodque caput, vultu mutabilis, albus & ater.*

But I am persuaded, that in many cases very good reasons might be given, why such a nation is more polite and learned, at a particular time, than any of its neighbours. At least, this is so curious a subject, that it were a pity to abandon it entirely, before we have found, whether it be susceptible of reasoning, and can be reduced to any general principles. I shall therefore proceed to deliver a few observations on this subject, which I submit to the censure and examination of the learned.

My first observation is, *That it is impossible for the arts and sciences to arise, at first, among any people, unless that people enjoy the blessing of a free government.*

In the first ages of the world, when men are as yet barbarous and ignorant, they seek no farther security against mutual violence and injustice, than the choice of some rulers, few or many, in whom they place an implicate confidence, without

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providing any security, by laws or political institutions, against the violence and injustice of these rulers. If the authority be centered in a single person, and if the people either by conquest, or by the ordinary course of propagation, increase to a great multitude, the monarch finding it impossible, in his own person, to execute every office of sovereignty, in every place, must delegate his authority to inferior magistrates, who preserve peace and order in their particular districts. As experience and education have not yet refined the judgments of men to any considerable degree, the prince, who is himself unrestrained, never thinks of restraining his ministers, but delegates his full authority to every one, whom he sets over any portion of the people. All general laws are attended with inconveniencies, when applied to particular cases; and it requires great penetration and experience, both to perceive that these inconveniencies are fewer than what result from full discretionary powers in every magistrate; and also to discern what general laws are, upon the whole, attended with fewest inconveniencies. This is a matter of so great difficulty, that men may have made some advances, even in the sublime arts of poetry and eloquence, where a rapidity of genius and imagination assists their progress before they have arrived at any great refinement in their municipal laws, where frequent trials, and diligent observation, can alone direct their improvements. It is not, therefore, to be supposed, that a barbarous monarch, unrestrained and uninstructed, will ever become a legislator, or think of restraining his *Bashaws* in every province, or even his *Cadis* in every village. We are told, that the late *Czar*, though actuated with a noble genius, and smit with the love and admiration of EUROPEAN arts; yet professed an esteem for the TURKISH policy



in this particular, and approved of such summary decisions of causes, as are practised in that barbarous monarchy, where the judges are not restrained by any methods, forms, or laws. He did not perceive, how contrary such a practice would have been to all his other endeavours for refining his people. Arbitrary power, in all cases, is somewhat oppressive and debasing; but 'tis altogether ruinous and intolerable, when contracted into a small compass; and becomes still worse, when the person, who possesses it, knows that the time of his authority is limited and uncertain. *Habet subiectos tanquam suos; viles, ut alienos* \*. He governs the subjects with full authority, as if they were his own; and with negligence or tyranny, as belonging to another. A people governed after such a manner are slaves in the full and proper sense of the word; and 'tis impossible they can ever aspire to any refinements of taste or reason. They dare not so much as pretend to enjoy the necessaries of life in plenty or security.

To expect, therefore, that the arts and sciences should take their first rise in a monarchy, is to expect a contradiction. Before these refinements have taken place, the monarch is ignorant and uninstructed; and not having knowledge sufficient to make him sensible of the necessity of balancing his government upon general laws, he delegates his full powers to all inferior magistrates. This barbarous policy debases the people, and for ever prevents all improvement. Were it possible, that, before science was known in the world, a monarch could possess so much wisdom as to become a legislator, and govern his people by law, not by the arbitrary will of their fellow subjects,

\* TACIT. Hist. lib. I.

it might be possible for that species of government to be the first nursery of arts and sciences. But in that supposition there seems to be a manifest contradiction.

It may happen, that a republic, in its infant state, may be supported by as few laws as a barbarous monarchy, and may entrust as unlimited an authority to its magistrates or judges. But, besides that the frequent elections of these magistrates by the people, are a considerable check upon their authority; 'tis impossible, but, in time, the necessity of restraining the magistrates, in order to preserve liberty, must at last appear, and give rise to general laws and statutes. The ROMAN Consuls, for some time, decided all causes, without being confined by any positive statutes, till the people, bearing this yoke with impatience, created the *decemvirs*, who promulgated the *twelve tables*; a body of laws, which, though, perhaps, they were not equal in bulk to one ENGLISH act of parliament, were almost the only written rules which regulated property and punishment, for some ages, in that famous republic. They were, however, sufficient, together with the forms of a free government, to secure the lives and properties of the citizens; to exempt one man from the dominion of another; and to protect every one against the violence or tyranny of his fellow citizens. In such a situation the sciences may raise their heads and flourish: But never can have being amidst such a scene of oppression and slavery, as always results from barbarous monarchies, where the people alone are restrained by the authority of the magistrates, and the magistrates are not restrained by any law or statute. An unlimited despotism of this nature, while it exists, effectually puts a stop to all improvements, and keeps men from attaining that knowledge, which is requisite to instruct them



them in the advantages arising from a better police, and more moderate authority.

Here then are the advantages of republics. Though a republic should be barbarous, it necessarily, by an infallible operation, gives rise to LAW, even before mankind have made any considerable advances in the other sciences. From law arises security: From security curiosity: And from curiosity knowledge. The latter steps of this progress may be more accidental; but the former are altogether necessary. A republic without laws can never have any duration. On the contrary, in a monarchical government, law arises not necessarily from the forms of government. Monarchy, when absolute, contains even something repugnant to law. Great wisdom and reflexion can alone reconcile them. But such a degree of wisdom can never be expected, before the greater refinements and improvements of human reason. These refinements require curiosity, security, and law. The *first* growth, therefore, of the arts and sciences can never be expected in despotic governments.

According to the necessary progress of things, law must precede science. In republics law may precede science, and may arise from the very nature of the government. In monarchies it arises not from the nature of the government, and cannot precede science. An absolute prince, who is barbarous, renders all his ministers and magistrates as absolute as himself: And there needs no more to prevent, for ever, all industry, curiosity, and science.

There are other causes which discourage the rise of the refined arts in despotic governments; though I take the want of laws, and the delegation of full powers to every petty magistrate, to be the principal. Eloquence certainly arises more  
naturally

naturally in popular governments: Emulation too in every accomplishment, must there be more animated and enlivened: And genius and capacity have a fuller scope and career. All these causes render free governments the only proper *nursery* for the arts and sciences.

The next observation which I shall make on this head, is, *That nothing is more favourable to the rise of politeness and learning, than a number of neighbouring and independent states connected together by commerce and policy.* The emulation, which naturally arises among those neighbouring states, is an obvious source of improvement; But what I would chiefly insist on is the stop, which such limited territories give both to *power* and to *authority*.

Extended governments, where a single person has great influence, soon become despotic; but small ones change naturally into commonwealths. A large government is accustomed by degrees to tyranny; because each act of violence is at first performed upon a part, which, being distant from the majority, is not taken notice of, nor excites any violent ferment. Besides, a large government, though the whole be discontented, may, by a little art, be kept in obedience; while each part, ignorant of the resolutions of the rest, is afraid to begin any commotion or insurrection. Not to mention, that there is a superstitious reverence for princes, which mankind naturally fall into when they do not often see the sovereign, and when many of them become not acquainted with him so as to perceive his weaknesses. And as large states can afford a great expence, in order to support the pomp of majesty; this is a kind of fascination



cination on mankind, and naturally contributes to the enslaving them.

In a small government, any act of oppression is immediately known through the whole: The murmurs and discontents, proceeding from it, are easily communicated: And the indignation rises the higher, that the subjects are not apt to apprehend in such states, that the distance is very wide between themselves and their sovereign. "No man," said the Prince DE CONDE, "is a hero to his *Valet de Chambre*." 'Tis certain, that admiration and acquaintance are altogether incompatible towards any mortal creature. Sleep and love convinced even ALEXANDER himself that he was not a God: But I suppose that such as attended him daily could easily have given him many other still more convincing proofs of his humanity.

But the divisions into small states are favourable to learning, by stopping the progress of *authority* as well as that of *power*. Reputation is often as great a fascination upon men as sovereignty, and is equally destructive to the freedom of thought and examination. But where a number of neighbouring states have a great intercourse of arts and commerce, their mutual jealousy keeps them from receiving too lightly the law from each other, in matters of taste and of reasoning, and makes them examine every work of art with the greatest care and accuracy. The contagion of popular opinions spreads not so easily from one place to another. It readily receives a check in some state or other, where it concurs not with the prevailing prejudices. And nothing but nature and reason, or at least, what bears them a strong resemblance, can force its way through all

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obstacles, and unite the most rival nations into an esteem and admiration of it.

GREECE was a cluster of little principalities, which soon became republics ; and being united both by their near neighbourhood, and by the ties of the same language and interest, they entered into the closest intercourse of commerce and learning. There concurred a happy climate, a soil not unfertile, and a most harmonious and comprehensive language ; so that every circumstance among that people seemed to favour the rise of the arts and sciences. Each city produced its several artists and philosophers, who refused to yield the preference to those of the neighbouring republics : Their contentions and debates sharpened the wits of men : A variety of objects was presented to the judgment, while each challenged the preference to the rest : And the sciences, not being dwarfed by the restraint of authority, were enabled to make such considerable shoots, as are, even at this time, the objects of our admiration. After the ROMAN *christian*, or *catholic* church had spread itself over the civilized world, and had engrossed all the learning of the times ; being really one large state within itself, and united under one head ; this variety of sects immediately disappeared, and the PERIPATETIC philosophy was alone admitted into all the schools, to the utter depravation of every kind of learning. But mankind, having at length thrown off this yoke, affairs are now turned nearly to the same situation as before, and EUROPE is at present a copy at large, of what GREECE was formerly a pattern in miniature. We have seen the advantage of this situation in several instances. What checked the progress of the CARTESIAN philosophy, to which the FRENCH nation shewed such a strong propensity towards



the end of the last century, but the opposition made to it by the other nations of EUROPE, who soon discovered the weak sides of that philosophy? The severest scrutiny, which NEWTON's theory has undergone, proceeded not from his countrymen, but from foreigners; and if it can overcome the obstacles which it meets with at present in all parts of EUROPE, it will probably go down triumphant to the latest posterity. The ENGLISH are become sensible of the scandalous licentiousness of their stage, from the example of the FRENCH decency and morals. The FRENCH are convinced, that their theatre has become somewhat effeminate, by too much love and gallantry; and begin to approve of the more masculine taste of some neighbouring nations.

In CHINA there seems to be a pretty considerable stock of politeness and science, which, in the course of so many centuries, might naturally be expected to ripen into something more perfect and finished, than what has yet arisen from them. But CHINA is one vast empire, speaking one language, governed by one law, and sympathizing in the same manners. The authority of any teacher, such as CONFUCIUS, was propagated easily from one corner of the empire to another. None had courage to resist the torrent of popular opinion. And posterity were not bold enough to dispute what had been universally received by their ancestors. This seems to be one natural reason, why the sciences have made so slow a progress in that mighty empire\*.

If

\* If it be asked how we can reconcile to the foregoing principles the happiness, riches, and good police of the CHINESE, who have always been governed by a sole monarch, and can scarce form an idea of a free government; I would answer, that though the CHINESE government be a pure monarchy, it is not, properly speaking,

If we consider the face of the globe, EUROPE, of all the four parts of the world, is the most broken by seas, rivers, and mountains; and GREECE of all countries of EUROPE. Hence these regions were naturally divided into several distinct governments. And hence the sciences arose in GREECE; and EUROPE has been hitherto the most constant seat of them.

I have sometimes been inclined to think, that interruptions in the periods of learning, were they not attended with such a destruction of ancient books, and the records of history, would be rather favourable to the arts and sciences, by breaking the progress of authority, and dethroning the tyrannical usurpers over human reason. In this particular, they have the same influence, as interruptions in political governments and societies. Consider the blind submission of the ancient philosophers to the several masters in each school, and you will be convinced, that no good could ever be expected from an hundred centuries of such a servile philosophy. Even the ECLECTICS, who arose about the age of AUGUSTUS, notwithstanding their

absolute. This proceeds from a peculiarity of the situation of that country: They have no neighbours, except the TARTARS, from whom they were, in some measure secured, at least seemed to be secured, by their famous wall, and by the great superiority of their numbers. By this means, military discipline has always been much neglected amongst them; and their standing forces are mere militia, of the worst kind; and unfit to suppress any general insurrection in countries so extremely populous. The sword, therefore, may properly be said to be always in the hands of the people, which is a sufficient restraint upon the monarch, and obliges him to lay his *mandarins* or governors of provinces under the restraint of general laws, in order to prevent those rebellions, which we learn from history to have been so frequent and dangerous in that government. Perhaps, a pure monarchy of this kind, were it fitted for a defence against foreign enemies, would be the best of all governments, as having both the tranquillity attending kingly power, and the moderation and liberty of popular assemblies.



professing to chuse freely what pleased them from every different sect, were yet, in the main, as slavish and dependent as any of their brethren; since they fought for truth, not in nature, but in the several schools; where they supposed she must necessarily be found, though not united in a body, yet dispersed in parts. Upon the revival of learning, those sects of STOICS and EPICUREANS, PLATONISTS, and PYTHAGOREANS, could never regain any credit or authority; and, at the same time, by the example of their fall, kept men from submitting, with such blind deference, to those new sects, which have attempted to gain an ascendant over them.

The *third* observation, which I shall form on this head, of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, is, *That though the only proper Nursery of these noble plants be a free government; yet they may be transplanted into any government; and that a republic is most favourable to the growth of the sciences, and a civilized monarchy to that of the polite arts.*

To balance a large state or society, whether monarchical or republican, on general laws, is a work of so great difficulty, that no human genius, however comprehensive, is able, by the mere dint of reason and reflection, to effect it. The judgments of many must unite in this work: Experience must guide their labour: Time must bring it to perfection: And the feeling of inconveniencies must correct the mistakes, which they inevitably fall into, in their first trials and experiments. Hence the impossibility appears, that this undertaking should be begun and carried on in any monarchy; since such a form of government, ere civilized, knows no other secret in policy, than that of entrusting unlimited powers with every governor

or magistrate, and subdividing the people into so many classes and orders of slavery. From such a situation, no improvement can ever be expected in the sciences, in the liberal arts, in laws, and scarce in the manual arts and manufactures. The same barbarism and ignorance, with which the government commences, is propagated to all posterity, and can never come to a period by the efforts or ingenuity of such unhappy slaves.

But though law, the source of all security and happiness, arises late in any government, and is the slow product of order and of liberty, it is not preserved with the same difficulty, with which it was produced; but when it has once taken root, is a hardy plant, which will scarce ever perish through the ill culture of men, or the rigour of the seasons. The arts of luxury, and much more the liberal arts, which depend on a refined taste or sentiment, are easily lost; because they are always relished by a few only, whose leisure, fortune, and genius fit them for such amusements. But what is profitable to every mortal, and in common life, when once discovered, can scarce ever perish, but by the total subversion of society, and by such furious inundations of barbarous invaders, as obliterate all memory of former arts and civility. Imitation also is apt to transport these coarser and more useful arts from one climate to another, and make them precede the refined arts in their progress; though perhaps they sprang after them in their first rise and propagation. From these causes proceed civilized monarchies, where the arts of government, first invented in free states, are preserved to the mutual advantage and security of sovereign and subject.

However perfect, therefore, the monarchical form may appear to some politicians, it owes all its perfection to the republican;



publican; nor is it possible, that a pure despotism, established among a barbarous people, can ever, by its native force and energy, refine and polish itself. It must borrow its laws, and methods, and institutions, and consequently its stability and order, from free governments. These advantages are the sole growth of republics. The extensive despotism of a barbarous monarchy, by entering into the detail of the government, as well as into the principal points of administration, for ever prevents all such improvements.

In a civilized monarchy, the prince alone is unrestrained in the exercise of his authority, and possesses alone a power, which is not bounded by any thing but custom, example, and the sense of his own interest. Every minister or magistrate, however eminent, must submit to the general laws, which govern the whole society, and must exert the authority delegated to him after the manner, which is prescribed. The people depend on none but their sovereign, for the security of their property. He is so far removed from them, and is so much exempt from private jealousies or interests, that this dependence is not felt. And thus a species of government arises, to which, in a high political rant, we may give the name of *Tyranny*, but which, by a just and prudent administration, may afford tolerable security to the people, and may answer most of the ends of political society.

But though in a civilized monarchy, as well as in a republic, the people have security for the enjoyment of their property; yet in both these forms of government, those who possess the supreme authority have the disposal of many honours and advantages, which excite the ambition and avarice of mankind. The only difference is, that in a republic, the candidates for  
offices

offices must look downwards, to gain the suffrages of the people; in a monarchy, they must turn their attention upwards, to court the good graces and favour of the great. To be successful in the former way, 'tis necessary for a man to make himself *useful*, by his industry, capacity, or knowledge: To be prosperous in the latter way, 'tis requisite for him to render himself *agreeable*, by his wit, complaisance, or civility. A strong genius succeeds best in republics: A refined taste in monarchies. And consequently the sciences are the more natural growth of the one, and the polite arts of the other.

Not to mention, that monarchies, receiving their chief stability from a superstitious reverence to priests and princes, have almost always abridged the liberty of reasoning, with regard to religion and politics, and consequently metaphysics and morals. All these form the most considerable branches of science. Mathematics and natural philosophy, which only remain, are not half so valuable.

There is a very great connection among all the arts, which contribute to pleasure; and the same delicacy of taste, which enables us to make improvements in one, will not allow the others to remain altogether rude and barbarous. Amongst all the arts of conversation, no one pleases more than mutual deference or civility, which leads us to resign our own inclinations to those of our companion, and to curb and conceal that presumption and arrogance so natural to the human mind. A good-natured man, who is well educated, practises this civility to every mortal without premeditation or interest. But, in order to render that valuable quality general among any people, it seems necessary to assist the natural disposition by some general motive. Where power rises up-



wards from the people to the great, as in all republics, such refinements of civility are apt to be little practised, since the whole state are, by that means, brought near to a level, and every member of it is rendered, in a great measure, independent of another. The people have the advantage, by the authority of their suffrages: The great, by the superiority of their station. But in a civilized monarchy, there is a long train of dependence from the prince to the peasant, which is not great enough to render property precarious, or depress the minds of the people; but is sufficient to beget in every one an inclination to please his superiors, and to form himself upon those models, which are most acceptable to people of condition, and education. Politeness of manners, therefore, arises most naturally in monarchies and courts; and where that flourishes, none of the liberal arts will be altogether neglected or despised.

The republics in EUROPE are at present noted for want of politeness. *The good manners of a SWISS civilized in HOLLAND\**, is an expression for rusticity among the FRENCH. The ENGLISH, in some degree, fall under the same censure, notwithstanding their learning and genius. And if the VENETIANS be an exception to the rule, they owe it, perhaps, to their communication with the other ITALIANS, most of whose governments beget a dependence more than sufficient for civilizing their manners.

'Tis difficult to pronounce any judgment concerning the refinements of the ancient republics in this particular: But I am apt to suspect, that the arts of conversation were not brought

\* C'est la politesse d'un Suisse.

En HOLLANDE civilisé.

so near to perfection among them as the arts of writing and composition. The scurrility of the ancient orators, in many instances, is quite shocking, and exceeds all belief. Vanity too is often not a little offensive in authors of that age \*; as well as the common licentiousness and immodesty of their stile, *Quicumque impudicus, adulter, ganeo, manu, ventre, pene, bona patria laceraverat*, says SALLUST in one of the gravest and most moral passages of his history. *Nam fuit ante Helenam Cunnus teterrima belli Causa*, is an expression of HORACE, in tracing the origin of moral good and evil. OVID and LUCRETIUS † are almost as licentious in their stile as my Lord ROCHESTER; though the former were fine gentlemen and delicate writers, and the latter, from the corruptions of that court, in which he lived, seems to have thrown off all regard to shame and decency. JUVENAL inculcates modesty with great zeal; but sets a very bad example of it, if we consider the impudence of his expressions.

I shall also be so bold, as to affirm, That among the ancients, there was not much delicacy of breeding, or that polite deference and respect, which civility obliges us either to express or counterfeit towards the persons with whom we converse. CICERO was certainly one of the politest gentlemen of his age; and yet I must confess I have frequently been shocked with the

\* 'Tis needless to cite CICERO or PLINY on this head: They are too much noted: But one is a little surprized to find ARRIAN, a very grave, judicious writer, interrupt the thread of his narration all of a sudden, to tell his readers that he himself is as eminent among the GREEKS for eloquence as ALEXANDER was for arms. Lib. 1.

† This poet (See lib. 4. 1165) recommends a very extraordinary cure for love, and what one expects not to meet with in so elegant and philosophical a poem. It seems to have been the original of some of Dr. SWIFT's beautiful and cleanly images. The elegant CATULLUS and PHÆDRUS fall under the same censure.



poor figure under which he represents his friend ATTICUS, in those dialogues, where he himself is introduced as a speaker. That learned and virtuous ROMAN, whose dignity, though he was only a private gentleman, was inferior to that of no one in ROME, is there shewn in rather a more pitiful light than PHILETTES's friend in our modern dialogues. He is a humble admirer of the orator, pays him frequent compliments, and receives his instructions, with all the deference a scholar owes to his master\*. Even CATO is treated in somewhat a cavalier manner in the dialogues *de finibus*. And 'tis remarkable, that CICERO, being a great sceptic in matters of religion, and unwilling to determine any thing on that head among the different sects of philosophy, introduces his friends disputing concerning the being and nature of the gods, while he is only a hearer; because, forsooth, it would have been an impropriety for so great a genius as himself, had he spoke, not to have said something decisive on the subject, and have carried every thing before him, as he always does on other occasions. There is also a spirit of dialogue observed in the eloquent books *de Oratore*, and a tolerable equality maintained among the speakers: But then these speakers are the great men of the age preceding the author, and he recounts the conference as only from hearsay.

One of the most particular details of a real dialogue, which we meet with in antiquity, is related by POLYBIUS †, when PHILIP, king of MACEDON, a prince of wit and parts, met

\* ATT. Non mihi videtur ad beate vivendum satis esse virtutem. MAR. At hercule Bruto meo videtur; cujus ego judicium, pace tua dixerim, longe antepono tuo. Tusc. Quæst. lib. 5.

† Lib. 17.

with TITUS FLAMININUS, one of the politeſt of the ROMANS as we learn from PLUTARCH ‡, accompanied with ambaffadors from almoſt all the GREEK cities. The ÆTOLIAN ambaffador very abruptly tells the king, that he talked like a fool or a mad-man (*ληγεῖν*) *That's evident*, ſays his majeſty, *even to a blind man*; which was a raillery on the blindneſs of his excellency. Yet all this paſt not the uſual bounds; For the conference was not diſturbed; and FLAMININUS was very well diverted with theſe ſtrokes of humour. At the end, when PHILIP craved a little time to conſult with his friends, of whom he had none preſent, the ROMAN general, being deſirous alſo to ſhew his wit, as the hiſtorian ſays, tells him, *that perhaps the reaſon, why he had none of his friends with him, was becauſe he had murdered them all*; which was actually the caſe. This unprovoked piece of ruſticity is not condemned by the hiſtorian, cauſed no farther reſentment in PHILIP, than to excite a SARDONIAN ſmile, or what we call a grin, and hindered him not from renewing the conference next day. PLUTARCH \* too mentions this raillery amongſt the witty and agreeable ſayings of FLAMININUS.

'Tis but an indifferent compliment, which HORACE pays to his friend GROSPHUS, in the ode addreſſed to him. *No one, ſays he, is happy in every reſpect. And I may perhaps enjoy ſome advantages, which you are deprived of. You poſſeſs great riches: Your bellowing herds cover the SICILIAN plains: Your chariot is drawn by the fineſt horſes: And you are arrayed in the righeſt purple. But the indulgent fates, with a ſmall inheritance, have given ME a fine genius, and have endowed me with*

‡ In vita FLAMIN.

\* Ibid.



a contempt for the malignant judgments of the vulgar\*. PHÆDRUS says to his patron, EUTYCHUS, *If you intend to read my works, I shall be pleased: If not, I shall, at least, have the advantage of pleasing posterity*†. I am apt to think that a modern poet would not have been guilty of such an impropriety as that which may be observed in VIRGIL's address to AUGUSTUS, when, after a great deal of extravagant flattery, and after having deified the emperor, according to the custom of those times, he, at last, places this god on the same level with himself. *By your gracious nod*, says he, *render my undertaking prosperous; and taking pity, together with me, of the Swains ignorant of husbandry, bestow your favourable influence on this work*‡. Had men, in that age, been accustomed to observe such

† ——— Nihil est ab omni

Parte beatum.

Abstulit clarum cita mors ACHILLEM,

Longa TITHONUM minuit senectus,

Et mihi forsan, tibi quod negarit,

Porriget hora.

Te greges centum, Siculæque circum

Mugiunt vaccæ: tibi tollit, hinni-

Tum apta quadrigis equa: te bis Afro

Murice tinctæ

Vestiunt lanæ: mihi parva rura, &

Spiritum Graiæ tenuem Camœnæ

Parca non mendax dedit & malignum

Spernere vulgus.

Lib. 2. Ode 16,

† Quem si leges, lætabor; sin autum minus,

Habebunt certe quo se oblectent poster.

‡ Ignarosque viæ *mecum* miseratus agrestes

Ingradere, & votis jam nunc assuesce vocari.

One would not say to a prince or great man, "When you and I were in such a place, we saw such a thing happen:" But, "When you were in such a place, I attended you: And such a thing happened."

Here

such niceties, a writer so delicate as VIRGIL would certainly have given a different turn to this sentence. The court of AUGUSTUS, however polite, had not yet, it seems, worn off the manners of the republic.

Cardinal WOLSEY apologized for his famous piece of infolence, in saying, EGO ET REX MEUS, *I and my king*, by observing, that this expression was exactly conformable to the *Latin* idiom, and that a ROMAN always named himself before the person to whom, or of whom he spake. Yet this seems to have been an instance of want of civility among that people. The ancients made it a rule, That the person of the greatest dignity should be mentioned first in the discourse: insomuch, that we find, the spring of a quarrel and jealousy between the ROMANS and ÆTOLIANS, to have been a poet's naming the ÆTOLIANS before the ROMANS, in celebrating a victory gain-

Here I cannot forbear mentioning a piece of delicacy observed in FRANCE, which seems to me excessive and ridiculous. You must not say, "That is a very fine dog." "Madam," But, "Madam, that is a very fine dog." They think it indecent that those words, *dog* and *madam*, should be coupled together in the sentence; though they have no reference to each other in the sense.

After all, I acknowledge, that this reasoning from single passages of ancient authors may seem fallacious; and that the foregoing arguments cannot have great force, but with those who are well acquainted with these writers, and know the truth of the general position. For instance, what absurdity would it be to assert, that VIRGIL understood not the force of the terms he employs, and could not chuse his epithets with propriety? Because in the following lines, addressed also to AUGUSTUS, he has failed in that particular, and has ascribed to the INDIANS a quality, which seems, in a manner, to turn his hero into ridicule.

— Et te maxime CÆSAR,

Qui nunc extremis ASIÆ jam victor in oris

Imbellem avertis ROMANIS arcibus Indum. Georg. Lib. 2.

ed.



ed by their united arms over the MACEDONIANS \*. Thus LIVIA disgusted TIBERIUS by placing her own name before his in an inscription †.

No advantages in this world are pure and unmixed. In like manner, as modern politeness, which is naturally so ornamental, runs often into affectation and foppery and disguise and insincerity; so the ancient simplicity, which is naturally so amiable and affecting, often degenerates into rusticity and abuse, scurrility and obscenity.

If the superiority in politeness should be allowed to modern times, the modern notions of *gallantry* and *honour*, the natural produce of courts and monarchies, will probably be assigned as the causes of this refinement. No one denies these inventions to be modern ‡. But some of the most zealous partizans of the ancients, have asserted them to be foppish and ridiculous, and a reproach rather than credit to the present age ||. It may here be proper to examine this question, with regard both to gallantry and honour. We shall begin with gallantry.

Nature has implanted in all living creatures an affection between the sexes, which even in the fiercest and most rapacious animals, is not merely confined to the satisfaction of the bodily appetite, but begets a friendship and mutual sympathy, which runs through the whole tenor of their lives. Nay, even in those

\* PLUT. in vita FLAMININI.

† TACIT. Ann. lib. 3. cap. 64.

‡ In the *Self-Tormentor* of TERENCE, CLINIAS, whenever he comes to town, instead of waiting on his mistress, sends for her to come to him.

|| My Lord SHAFTESBURY, see his *Moralists*.

species,

species, where nature limits the indulgence of this appetite to one season and to one object, and forms a kind of marriage or association between a single male and female, there is yet a visible complacency and benevolence, which extends farther, and mutually softens the affections of the sexes towards each other \*. How much more must this have place in man, where the confinement of the appetite is not natural; but either is derived accidentally from some strong charm of love, or arises from reflections on duty and convenience? Nothing, therefore, can proceed less from affectation than the passion of gallantry. 'Tis *natural* in the highest degree. Art and education, in the most elegant courts, make no more alteration on it, than on all the other laudable passions. They only turn the mind more towards it; they refine it; they polish it; and give it a proper grace and expression.

But gallantry is as *generous* as it is *natural*. To correct such gross vices, as lead us to commit a real injury to others, is the part of morals, and the object of the most ordinary education. Where *that* is not attended to, in some degree, no human society can subsist. But in order to render conversation, and the intercourse of minds more easy and agreeable, Good-manners have been invented, and have carried the matter somewhat farther. Wherever nature has given the mind a propensity to any

\* Tutti gli altri animali, che sono in terra,  
O che vivon quieti & stanno in pace;  
O se vengon a rissa, & si fan guerra,  
A la femina il maschio non la face.  
L' orsa con l' orso al bosco sicura erra,  
La Leoneffa appressò il Leon giace,  
Con Lupo vive il Lupa sicura.  
Ne la Guivenca ha del Torel paura.

ARIOSTO, Canto 5.



vice, or to any passion disagreeable to others, refined breeding has taught men to throw the bias on the opposite side, and to preserve, in all their behaviour, the appearance of sentiments contrary to those which they naturally incline to. Thus, as we are commonly proud and selfish, and apt to assume the preference above others, a polite man learns to behave with deference towards those with whom he converses, and to yield the superiority to them in all the common incidents of society. In like manner, wherever a person's situation may naturally beget any disagreeable suspicion in him, 'tis the part of good-manners to prevent it, by a studied display of sentiments, directly contrary to those of which he is apt to be jealous. Thus, old men know their infirmities, and naturally dread contempt from the youth: Hence, well-educated youth redouble the instances of respect and deference to their elders. Strangers and foreigners are without protection: Hence, in all polite countries, they receive the highest civilities, and are intitled to the first place in every company. A man is lord in his own family, and his guests are, in a manner, subject to his authority: Hence, he is always the lowest person in the company; attentive to the wants of every one; and giving himself all the trouble, in order to please, which may not betray too visible an affectation, or impose too much constraint on his guests \*. Gallantry is nothing but an instance of the same generous and refined attention. As nature has given *man* the superiority above *woman*, by endow-

\* The frequent mention in ancient authors of that ill-bred custom of the master of the family's eating better bread or drinking better wine at table, than he afforded his guests, is but an indifferent mark of the civility of those ages. See JUVENAL. sat. 5. PLINII, lib. 14. cap. 13. Also PLINII *Epist.* Lucian *de mercede conductis*, *Saturnalia*, &c. There is scarce any part of EUROPE at present so uncivilized as to admit of such a custom.

ing him with greater strength both of mind and body; 'tis his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by the generosity of his behaviour, and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions. Barbarous nations display this superiority, by reducing their females to the most abject slavery; by confining them, by beating them, by selling them, by killing them. But the male sex, among a polite people, discover their authority in a more generous, though not a less evident manner; by civility, by respect, by complaisance, and, in a word, by gallantry. In good company, you need not ask, Who is the master of the feast? The man who sits in the lowest place, and who is always industrious in helping every one, is most certainly the person. We must either condemn all such instances of generosity, as foppish and affected, or admit of gallantry among the rest. The ancient MUSCOVITES wedded their wives with a whip, instead of a wedding-ring. The same people, in their own houses, took always the precedence above foreigners, even \* foreign ambassadors. These two instances of their generosity and politeness are much of a piece.

Gallantry is not less consistent with *wisdom* and *prudence*, than with *nature* and *generosity*; and when under proper regulations, contributes more than any other invention, to the *entertainment* and *improvement* of the youth of both sexes. In all vegetables, 'tis observable, that the flower and the seed are always connected together; and in like manner, among every species of animals, nature has founded on the love between the sexes their sweetest and best enjoyment. But the satisfaction

\* See *Relation of three Embassies*, by the earl of CARLISLE.



of the bodily appetite is not alone of great value; and even among brute creatures, we find, that their play and dalliance, and other expressions of fondness, form the greatest part of the entertainment. In rational beings, we must certainly admit the mind for a considerable share. Were we to rob the feast of all its garniture of reason, discourse, sympathy, friendship, and gaiety, what remains would scarce be worth acceptance, in the judgment of the truly elegant and luxurious.

What better school for manners, than the company of virtuous women; where the mutual endeavour to please must insensibly polish the mind; where the example of the female softness and modesty must communicate itself to their admirers, and where the delicacy of that sex puts every one on his guard, lest he give offence by any breach of decency?

Among the ancients, the character of the fair-sex was considered as altogether domestic, nor were they regarded as part of the polite world, or of good company. This, perhaps, is the true reason why the ancients have not left us one piece of pleasantry, that is excellent, (unless one may except the banquet of XENOPHON, and the dialogues of LUCIAN) though many of their serious compositions are altogether inimitable. HORACE condemns the coarse railleries and cold jests of PLAUTUS: But, though the most easy, agreeable, and judicious writer in the world, is his own talent for ridicule very striking or refined? This, therefore, is one considerable improvement, which the polite arts have received from gallantry, and from courts, where it first arose.

The point of *honour*, or duelling, is a modern invention, as well as *gallantry*; and by some esteemed equally useful for the refining

refining of manners: But how it has contributed to that effect, I am at a loss to determine. Conversation, among the greatest rustics, is not commonly infested with such rudeness as can give occasion to duels, even according to the most refined laws of this fantastic honour; and as to the other small indecencies, which are the most offensive, because the most frequent, they can never be cured by the practice of duelling. But these notions are not only *useless*: They are also *pernicious*. By separating the man of honour from the man of virtue, the greatest profligates have got something to value themselves upon, and have been able to keep themselves in countenance, though guilty of the most shameful and most dangerous vices. They are debauchees, spend-thrifts, and never pay a farthing they owe: But they are men of honour; and therefore are to be received as gentlemen in all companies.

There are some of the parts of modern honour, which are the most essential parts of morality; such as fidelity, the observing promises, and telling truth. These points of honour Mr. ADDISON had in his eye when he made JUBA say,

*Honour's a sacred tie, the law of kings,  
The noble mind's distinguishing perfection,  
That aids and strengthens virtue when it meets her,  
And imitates her actions where she is not:  
It ought not to be sported with.*

These lines are very beautiful: But I am afraid, that Mr. ADDISON has here been guilty of that impropriety of sentiment, with which, on other occasions, he has so justly reproached our poets. The ancients certainly never had any notion of *honour* as distinct from *virtue*.

But,



But, to return from this digression, I shall advance it as a *fourth* observation on this subject, of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, *That when the arts and sciences come to perfection in any state, from that moment they naturally, or rather necessarily decline, and seldom or never revive in that nation, where they formerly flourished.*

It must be confessed, that this maxim, though conformable to experience, may, at first sight, be esteemed very contrary to reason. If the natural genius of mankind be the same in all ages, and in almost all countries, (as I am of opinion it is) it must very much forward and cultivate this genius, to be possessed of exact patterns in every art, which may regulate the taste, and fix the objects of imitation. The models left us by the ancients gave birth to all the arts about 200 years ago, and have mightily advanced their progress in every country of EUROPE: Why had they not a like effect during the reign of TRAJAN and his successors, when they were much more entire, and were still admired and studied by the whole world? So late as the emperor JUSTINIAN, the POET, by way of distinction, was understood, among the GREEKS, to be HOMER; among the ROMANS, VIRGIL. Such admiration still remained for these divine Geniuses; though no poet had appeared for many centuries, who could justly pretend to have imitated them.

A man's genius is, always, in the beginning of his life, as much unknown to himself as to others, and 'tis only after frequent trials, attended with success, that he dares think himself equal to those undertakings, in which they who have succeeded, have fixed the admiration of mankind. If his own nation be already possessed of many models of eloquence, he naturally  
compares

compares his own juvenile exercises with these; and being sensible of the infinite disproportion between them, is discouraged from any further attempts, and never aims at a rivalry with those authors, whom he so much admires. A noble emulation is the source of every excellence. Admiration and modesty naturally extinguish this emulation. And no one is so liable to an excess of admiration and modesty, as a truly great genius.

Next to emulation, the greatest encourager of the noble arts is praise and glory. A writer is animated with new force, when he hears the applauses of the world for his former productions; and, being roused by such a motive, he often reaches a pitch of perfection, which is equally surprizing to himself, and to his readers. But when the posts of honour are all occupied, his first attempts are but coldly received by the public; being compared to productions, which are both in themselves more excellent, and have already the advantage of an established reputation. Were *MOLIERE* and *CORNEILLE* to bring upon the stage at present their early productions, which were formerly so well received, it would discourage the young poets, to see the indifference and disdain of the public. The ignorance of the age alone could have given admission to the *Prince of TYRE*; but 'tis to that we owe *the Moor*: Had *Every man in his humour* been rejected, we had never seen *VOLPONE*.

Perhaps it may not be for the advantage of any nation, to have the arts imported from their neighbours in too great perfection. This extinguishes emulation, and sinks the ardour of the generous youth. So many models of *ITALIAN* painting brought into *BRITAIN*, instead of exciting our artists, is the cause of their small progress in that noble art. The same, perhaps,



haps, was the case of ROME, when it received the arts from GREECE. That multitude of polite productions in the FRENCH language, dispersed all over GERMANY and the NORTH, hinder these nations from cultivating their own language, and keep them still dependent on their neighbours for those elegant entertainments.

'Tis true, the ancients had left us models in every kind of writing, which are highly worthy of admiration. But besides that they were wrote in languages, which were known only to the learned; besides this, I say, the comparison is not so perfect nor intire between modern wits, and those who lived in so remote an age. Had WALLER been born in ROME, during the reign of TIBERIUS, his first productions had been despised, when compared to the finished odes of HORACE. But in this island the superiority of the ROMAN poet diminished nothing from the fame of the ENGLISH. We esteemed ourselves sufficiently happy, that our climate and language could produce but a faint copy of so excellent an original.

In short, the arts and sciences, like some plants, require a fresh soil; and however rich the land may be, and however you may recruit it by art or care, it will never, when once exhausted, produce any thing that is perfect or finished in the kind.

## E S S A Y XV.

## THE EPICUREAN\*.

**T**IS a great mortification to the vanity of man, that his utmost art and industry can never equal the meanest of nature's productions, either for beauty or value. Art is only the underworkman, and is employed to give a few strokes of embellishment to those pieces, which come from the hand of the master. Some of the drapery may be of his drawing; but he is not allowed to touch the principal figure. Art may make a suit of clothes: But nature must produce a man.

Even in those productions, which are commonly denominated works of art, we find that the noblest of the kind are beholden for their chief beauty to the force and happy influence of nature. To the *Oeſtrum* or native enthusiasm of the poets, we owe whatever is admirable in their productions. The greatest genius, where nature at any time fails him (for she is not equal) throws aside the lyre, and hopes not, from the rules of art, to reach that divine harmony, which must proceed from her in-

\* OR, *The man of elegance and pleasure.* The intention of this and the three following essays is not so much, to explain accurately the sentiments of the ancient sects of philosophy, as to deliver the sentiments of sects, that naturally form themselves in the world, and entertain different ideas of human life and of happiness. I have given each of them the name of the philosophical sect, to which it bears the greatest affinity.



spiration alone. How poor are those songs, where a happy flow of fancy has not furnished materials for art to embellish and refine!

But of all the fruitless attempts of art, no one is so ridiculous, as that which the severe philosophers have undertaken, the producing an *artificial happiness*, and making us be pleased by rules of reason, and by reflection. Why did none of them claim the reward, which XERXES promised to him, who could invent a new pleasure? Unless, perhaps, they invented so many pleasures for their own use, that they despised riches, and stood in no need of any enjoyments, which the rewards of that monarch could procure them. I am apt, indeed, to think, that they were not willing to furnish the PERSIAN court with a new pleasure, by presenting it with so new and unusual an object of ridicule. Their speculations, when confined to theory, and gravely delivered in the schools of GREECE, might excite admiration in their ignorant pupils: But the attempting to reduce such principles to practice would soon have betrayed their absurdity.

You pretend to make me happy by reason, and by rules of art. You must, then, create me anew by rules of art. For on my original frame and structure does my happiness depend. But you want power to effect this; and skill too, I am afraid: Nor can I entertain a less opinion of nature's wisdom than of yours. And let her conduct the machine, which she has so wisely framed. I find that I should only spoil it by my tampering.

To what purpose should I pretend to regulate, refine, or invigorate any of those springs or principles, which nature has  
implanted

implanted in me? Is this the road by which I must reach happiness? But happiness implies ease, contentment, repose, and pleasure; not watchfulness, care, and fatigue. The health of my body consists in the facility with which all its operations are performed. The stomach digests the aliments: The heart circulates the blood: The brain separates and refines the spirits: And all this without my concerning myself in the matter. When by my will alone I can stop the blood, as it runs with impetuosity along its canals, then may I hope to change the course of my sentiments and passions. In vain should I strain my faculties, and endeavour to receive pleasure from an object, which is not fitted by nature to affect my organs with delight. I may give myself pain by my fruitless endeavours, but shall never reach any pleasure.

Away then with all those vain pretences of making ourselves happy within ourselves, of feasting on our own thoughts, of being satisfied with the consciousness of well-doing, and of despising all assistance and all supplies from external objects. This is the voice of PRIDE, not of NATURE. And it were well, if even this pride could support itself, and communicate a real *inward* pleasure, however melancholy or severe. But this impotent pride can do no more than regulate the *outside*; and with infinite pains and attention compose the language and countenance to a philosophical dignity, in order to deceive the ignorant vulgar. The heart, mean while, is empty of all enjoyment: And the mind, unsupported by its proper objects, sinks into the deepest sorrow and dejection. Miserable, but vain mortal! Thy mind be happy within itself! With what resources is it endowed to fill so immense a void, and supply the



place of all thy bodily senses and faculties? Can thy head subsist without thy other members? In such a situation,

*What foolish figure must it make?*

*Do nothing else but sleep and ake.*

Into such a lethargy, or such a melancholy, must thy mind be plunged, when deprived of foreign occupations and enjoyments.

Keep me, therefore, no longer in this violent constraint. Confine me not within myself; but point out to me those objects and pleasures, which afford the chief enjoyment. But why do I apply to you, proud and ignorant sages, to shew me the road to happiness? Let me consult my own passions and inclinations. In them must I read the dictates of nature; not in your frivolous discourses.

But see, propitious to my wishes, the divine, the amiable PLEASURE \*, the supreme Love of GODS and men, advances towards me. At her approach, my heart beats with genial heat, and every sense and every faculty is dissolved in joy; while she pours around me all the embellishments of the spring, and all the treasures of the autumn. The melody of her voice charms my ears with the softest music, as she invites me to partake of those delicious fruits, which with a smile that diffuses a glory on the heavens and the earth, she presents to me. The sportive CUPIDS, who attend her, or fan me with their odoriferous wings, or pour on my head the most fragrant oils, or offer me their sparkling nectar in golden goblets. O! for ever let me spread my limbs on this bed of roses, and thus, thus

\* *Dia Voluptas.* LUCRET.

feel the delicious moments, with soft and downy steps, glide along. But cruel chance! Whither do you fly so fast? Why do my ardent wishes, and that load of pleasures, under which you labour, rather hasten than retard your unrelenting pace? Suffer me to enjoy this soft repose, after all my fatigues in search of happiness. Suffer me to satiate myself with these delicacies, after the pains of so long and so foolish an abstinence.

But it will not do. The roses have lost their hue: The fruit its flavour: And that delicious wine, whose fumes, so late, intoxicated all my senses with such delight, now solicits in vain the fated palate. *Pleasure* smiles at my languor. She beckens her sister, *Virtue*, to come to her assistance. The gay, the frolic *Virtue* observes the call, and brings along the whole troop of my jovial friends. Welcome, thrice welcome, my ever dear companions, to these shady bowers, and to this luxurious repast. Your presence has restored to the rose its hue, and to the fruit its flavour. The vapours of this sprightly nectar now again play around my heart; while you partake of my delights, and discover in your chearful looks, the pleasure which you receive from my happiness and satisfaction. The like do I receive from yours; and encouraged by your joyous presence, shall again renew the feast, with which, from too much enjoyment, my senses were well nigh fated; while the mind kept not pace with the body, nor afforded relief to her over-burthened partner.

In our chearful discourses, better than in the formal reasonings of the schools, is true wisdom to be found. In our friendly endearments, better than in the hollow debates of statesmen and pretended patriots, does true virtue display itself. Forgetful of the past, secure of the future, let us here enjoy the present;



sent; and while we yet possess a being, let us fix some good, beyond the power of fate or fortune. To-morrow will bring its own pleasures along with it: Or should it disappoint our fond wishes, we shall at least enjoy the pleasure of reflecting on the pleasures of to-day.

Fear not, my friends, that the barbarous dissonance of BACCHUS, and of his revellers, should break in upon this entertainment, and confound us with their turbulent and clamorous pleasures. The sprightly muses wait around; and with their charming symphony, sufficient to soften the wolves and tygers of the savage desert, inspire a soft joy into every bosom. Peace, harmony, and concord reign in this retreat; nor is the silence ever broke but by the music of our songs, or the chearful accents of our friendly voices.

But hark! the favourite of the muses, the gentle DAMON, strikes the lyre; and while he accompanies its harmonious notes with his more harmonious song, he inspires us with the same happy debauch of fancy, by which he is himself transported. “Ye happy youth,” he sings, “Ye favoured of heaven \*, while the wanton spring pours upon you all her blooming honours, let not *glory* seduce you, with her delusive blaze, to pass in perils and dangers this delicious season, this prime of life. Wisdom points out to you the road to pleasure: Nature too beckens you to follow her in that smooth and flowery path. Will you shut your ears to their

\* An imitation of the SYRENS song in TASSO.

“ O Giovinetti, mentre APRILE & MAGGIO

“ V’ ammantan di florité & verde spoglie,” &c.

Giurefalemme liberata, *Canto* 14.

“ com-

“ commanding voice? Will you harden your heart to their  
 “ soft allurements? Oh, deluded mortals, thus to lose your  
 “ youth, thus to throw away so invaluable a present, to trifle  
 “ with so perishing a blessing. Contemplate well your recom-  
 “ pence. Consider that glory, which so allures your proud  
 “ hearts, and seduces you with your own praises. 'Tis an  
 “ echo, a dream, nay the shadow of a dream, which is dissi-  
 “ pated by every wind, and lost by every contrary breath of  
 “ the ignorant and ill-judging multitude. You fear not, that  
 “ even death itself shall ravish it from you. But behold! while  
 “ you are yet alive, calumny bereaves you of it; ignorance ne-  
 “ glects it; nature enjoys it not; fancy alone, renouncing  
 “ every pleasure, receives this airy recompence, empty and  
 “ unstable as herself.”

Thus the hours pass unperceived along, and lead in their  
 wanton train all the pleasures of sense, and all the joys of har-  
 mony and friendship. Smiling *innocence* closes the procession;  
 and while she presents herself to our ravished eyes, she embel-  
 lishes the whole scene, and renders the view of these pleasures  
 as transporting, after they have past us, as when, with laugh-  
 ing countenances, they were yet advancing towards us.

But the sun has sunk below the horizon; and darkness steal-  
 ing silently upon us, has now buried all nature in an universal  
 shade. “ Rejoice, my friends, continue your repast, or change  
 “ it for soft repose. Though absent, your joy or your tranquil-  
 “ lity shall still be mine.” *But whither do you go? Or what*  
*new pleasures call you from our society? Is there aught agreeable*  
*without your friends? And can aught please, in which we par-*  
*take not?* “ Yes, my friends; the joy, which I now seek, ad-

“ mits



“mits not of your participation. Here alone I wish your absence: And here alone can I find a sufficient compensation for the loss of your society.”

But I have not advanced far through the shades of the thick wood, which spreads a double night around me, ere, methinks, I perceive through the gloom the charming CÆLIA, the mistress of my wishes, who wanders impatient through the grove, and preventing the appointed hour, silently chides my tardy steps. But the joy, which she receives from my presence, best pleads my excuse; and dissipating every anxious and every angry thought, leave room for nought but mutual joy and rapture. With what words, my fair one, shall I express my tenderness, or describe the emotions which now warm my transported bosom! Words are too faint to describe my love; and if, alas! you feel not the same flame within you, in vain shall I endeavour to convey to you a just conception of it. But your every word and every motion suffice to remove this doubt; and while they express your passion, serve also to enflame mine. How amiable this solitude, this silence, this darkness! No objects now importune the ravished soul. The thought, the sense, all full of nothing but our mutual happiness, wholly possess the mind, and convey a pleasure, which deluded mortals vainly seek for in every other enjoyment.—

But why does your bosom heave with these sighs, while tears bathe your glowing cheeks? Why distract your heart with such vain anxieties? Why so often ask me, *How long my love shall yet endure?* Alas, my CÆLIA, can I resolve this question? *Do I know how long my life shall yet endure?* But does this also disturb your tender breast? And is the image of our frail

frail mortality for ever present with you, to throw a damp on your gayest hours, and poison even those joys which love inspires? Consider rather, that if life be frail, if youth be transitory, we should well employ the present moment, and lose no part of so perishable an existence. Yet a little moment and *these* shall be no more. We shall be, as if we had never been. Not a memory of us be left upon earth; and even the fabulous shades below will not afford us a habitation. Our fruitless anxieties, our vain projects, our uncertain speculations shall all be swallowed up and lost. Our present doubts, concerning the original cause of all things, must never, alas! be resolved. This alone we may be certain of, that if any governing mind preside over the universe, he must be pleased to see us fulfil the ends of our being, and enjoy that pleasure, for which alone we were created. Let this reflection give ease to your anxious thoughts; but render not your joys too serious, by dwelling for ever upon it. 'Tis sufficient, once, to be acquainted with this philosophy, in order to give an unbounded loose to love and jollity, and remove all the scruples of a vain superstition: But while youth and passion, my fair-one, prompt our eager desires, we must find gayer subjects of discourse, to intermix with these amorous caresses.



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## ESSAY XVI.

### THE STOIC\*.

**T**HERE is this obvious and material difference in the conduct of nature, with regard to man and other animals, that having endowed the former with a sublime celestial spirit, and having given him an affinity with superior beings, she allows not such noble faculties to lie lethargic or idle; but urges him, by necessity, to employ, on every emergence, his utmost *art* and *industry*. Brute creatures have many of their necessities supplied by nature, being clothed and armed by this beneficent parent of all things: And where their own *industry* is requisite on any occasion, nature, by implanting instincts, still supplies them with the *art*, and guides them to their good, by her unerring precepts. But man, exposed naked and indigent to the rude elements, rises slowly from that helpless state, by the care and vigilance of his parents; and having attained his utmost growth and perfection, reaches only a capacity of subsisting, by his own care and vigilance. Every thing is sold to skill and labour; and where nature furnishes the materials, they are still rude and unfinished, till industry, ever active and intelligent, refines them from their brute state, and fits them for human use and convenience.

\* Or the man of action and virtue.

Acknowledge, therefore, O man, the beneficence of nature: For she has given thee that intelligence which supplies all thy necessities. But let not indolence, under the false appearance of gratitude, persuade thee to rest contented with her presents. Wouldest thou return to the raw herbage for thy food, the open sky for thy covering, and to stones and clubs for thy defence against the ravenous animals of the desert? Then return also to thy savage manners, to thy timorous superstition, to thy brutal ignorance; and sink thyself below those animals, whose condition thou admirest, and wouldest so fondly imitate.

Thy kind parent, nature, having given thee art and intelligence, has filled the whole globe with materials for these talents to work upon: Harken to her voice, which so plainly tells thee, that thou thyself shouldest also be the object of thy industry, and that by art and attention thou canst alone acquire that ability, which will raise thee to thy proper station in the universe. Behold this artizan, who converts a rude and shapeless stone into a noble metal; and molding that metal by his cunning hands, creates, as it were by magic, every weapon for his defence, and every utensil for his convenience. He has not this skill from nature: Use and practice hath taught it him: And if thou wouldest emulate his success, thou must follow his laborious footsteps.

But while thou *ambitiously* aspirest to the perfecting thy bodily powers and faculties, wouldest thou *meanly* neglect thy mind, and from a preposterous sloth, leave it still rude and uncultivated, as it came from the hands of nature? Far be such folly and negligence from every rational being. If nature has been frugal in her gifts and endowments, there is the more



need of art to supply her defects. If she has been generous and liberal, know that she still expects industry and application on our part, and revenges herself in proportion to our negligent ingratitude. The richest genius, like the most fertile soil, when uncultivated, shoots up into the rankest weeds; and instead of vines and olives for the pleasure and use of man, produces, to its slothful owner, the most abundant crop of poisons.

The great end of all human industry, is the attainment of happiness. For this were arts invented, sciences cultivated, laws ordained, and societies modelled, by the profoundest wisdom of patriots and legislators. Even the lonely savage, who lies exposed to the inclemency of the elements, and the fury of the wild beasts, forgets not, for a moment, this grand object of his being. Ignorant as he is of every art of life, he keeps still in view the end of all those arts, and eagerly seeks for felicity amidst that darkness with which he is environed. But as much as the wildest savage is inferior to the polished citizen, who, under the protection of laws, enjoys every convenience which industry has invented; so much is this citizen himself inferior to the man of virtue, and the true philosopher, who governs his appetites, subdues his passions, and has learned, from reason, to set a just value on every pursuit and enjoyment. For is there an art and apprenticeship necessary for every other attainment? And is there no art of life, no rule, no precepts to direct us in this principal concern? Can no particular pleasure be attained without skill; and can the whole be regulated without reflection or intelligence, by the blind guidance of appetite and instinct? Surely then no mistakes are ever committed in this affair; but every man, however dissolute and negligent, proceeds in the pursuit of happiness, with as unerring

erring a motion, as that which the celestial bodies observe, when, conducted by the hand of the Almighty, they roll along the ethereal plains. But if mistakes be often, be inevitably committed, let us register these mistakes; let us consider their causes; let us weigh their importance; let us inquire for their remedies. When from this we have fixed all the rules of conduct, we are *philosophers*: When we have reduced these rules to practice, we are *sages*.

Like many subordinate artists, employed to form the several wheels and springs of a machine: Such are those who excel in all the particular arts of life. *He* is the master workman who puts those several parts together, moves them according to just harmony and proportion, and produces true felicity as the result of their conspiring order.

While thou hast such an alluring object in view, shall that labour and attention, which is requisite to the attaining thy end, ever seem burdensome and intolerable? Know, that this labour itself is the chief ingredient of the felicity to which thou aspirest, and that every enjoyment soon becomes insipid and distasteful, when not acquired by fatigue and industry. See the hardy hunters rise from their downy couches, shake off the slumbers which still weigh down their heavy eye-lids, and, ere *Aurora* has yet covered the heavens with her flaming mantle, hasten to the forest. They leave behind, in their own houses, and in the neighbouring plains, animals of every kind, whose flesh furnishes the most delicious fare, and which offer themselves to the fatal stroke. Laborious man disdains so easy purchase. He seeks for a prey, which hides itself from his search, or flies from his pursuit, or defends itself from his violence.

Having



Having exerted in the chase every passion of the mind, and every member of the body, he then finds the charms of repose, and with joy compares its pleasures to those of his engaging labours.

And can vigorous industry give pleasure to the pursuit even of the most worthless prey, which frequently escapes our toils? And cannot the same industry render the cultivating our mind, the moderating our passions, the enlightening our reason, an agreeable occupation; while we are every day sensible of our progress, and behold our inward features and countenance brightening incessantly with new charms? Begin by curing yourself of this lethargic indolence; the task is not difficult: You need but taste the sweets of honest labour. Proceed to learn the just value of every pursuit; long study is not requisite: Compare, though but for once, the mind to the body, virtue to fortune, and glory to pleasure. You will then perceive the advantages of industry: You will then be sensible what are the proper objects of your industry.

In vain do you seek repose from beds of roses: In vain do you hope for enjoyment from the most delicious wines and fruits. Your indolence itself becomes a fatigue: Your pleasure itself creates disgust. The mind, unexercised, finds every delight insipid and loathsome; and ere yet the body, full of noxious humours, feels the torment of its multiplied diseases, your nobler part is sensible of the invading poison, and seeks in vain to relieve its anxiety by new pleasures, which still augment the fatal malady.

I need not tell you, that by this eager pursuit of pleasure, you more and more expose yourself to fortune and accidents,

and rivet your affections on external objects, which chance may, in a moment, ravish from you. I shall suppose, that your indulgent stars favour you still with the enjoyment of your riches and possessions. I prove to you, that even in the midst of your luxurious pleasures, you are unhappy; and that, by too much indulgence, you are incapable of enjoying what prosperous fortune still allows you to possess.

But surely the instability of fortune is a consideration not to be over-looked or neglected. Happiness cannot possibly exist, where there is no security; and security can have no place, where fortune has any dominion. Though that unstable deity should not exert her rage against you, the dread of it would still torment you; would disturb your slumbers, haunt your dreams, and throw a damp on the jollity of your most delicious banquets.

The temple of wisdom is seated on a rock, above the rage of the fighting elements, and inaccessible to all the malice of man. The rolling thunder breaks below; and those more terrible instruments of human fury reach not to so sublime a height. The sage, while he breathes that serene air, looks down with pleasure, mixed with compassion, on the errors of mistaken mortals, who blindly seek for the true path of life, and pursue riches, nobility, honour, or power, for genuine felicity. The greatest part he beholds disappointed of their fond wishes: Some lament, that having once possessed the object of their desires, it is ravished from them by envious fortune: And all complain, that even their own vows, though granted, cannot give them happiness, or relieve the anxiety of their distracted minds.

But



But does the sage preserve himself always in this philosophic indifference, and rest contented with lamenting the miseries of mankind, without ever employing himself for their relief? Does he constantly indulge this severe wisdom, which, by pretending to elevate him above human accidents, does in reality harden his heart, and render him careless of the interests of mankind, and of society? No: He knows that in this fallen *Apathy*, neither true wisdom nor true happiness are to be found. He feels too strongly the charm of the social affections ever to counteract so sweet, so natural, so virtuous a propensity. Even when, bathed in tears, he laments the miseries of human race, of his country, of his friends, and unable to give succour, can only relieve them by compassion; he yet rejoices in the generous disposition, and feels a satisfaction superior to that of the most indulged sense. So engaging are the sentiments of humanity, that they brighten up the very face of sorrow, and operate like the sun, which, shining on a dusky cloud or falling rain, paints on them the most glorious colours which are to be found in the whole circle of nature.

But 'tis not here alone, that the social virtues display their energy. With whatever ingredient you mix them, they are still predominant. As sorrow cannot overcome them, so neither can sensual pleasure obscure them. The joys of love, however tumultuous, banish not the tender sentiments of sympathy and affection. They even derive their chief influence from that generous passion; and when presented alone, afford nothing to the unhappy mind but lassitude and disgust. Behold this sprightly debauchee, who professes a contempt of all other pleasures but those of wine and jollity: Separate him from his companions, like a spark from a fire, where before it contributed

to the general blaze: His alacrity suddenly extinguishes; and though furrounded with every other means of delight, he lothes the sumptuous banquet, and prefers even the most abstracted study and speculation, as more agreeable and entertaining.

But the social passions never afford such transporting pleasures, or make so glorious an appearance in the eyes both of GOD and man, as when, shaking off every earthly mixture, they associate themselves with the sentiments of virtue, and prompt us to laudable and worthy actions. As harmonious colours mutually give and receive a lustre by their friendly union; so do these ennobling sentiments of the human mind. See the triumph of nature in parental affection! What selfish passion; what sensual delight is a match for it! Whether a man exults in the prosperity and virtue of his offspring, or flies to their succour, through the most threatening and tremendous dangers?

Proceed still in purifying the generous passion, you will still the more admire its shining glories. What charms are there in the harmony of minds, and in a friendship founded on mutual esteem and gratitude! What satisfaction in relieving the distressed, in comforting the afflicted, in raising the fallen, and in stopping the career of cruel fortune, or of more cruel man, in their insults over the good and virtuous! But what supreme joy in the victories over vice as well as misery, when, by virtuous example or wise exhortation, our fellow-creatures are taught to govern their passions, reform their vices, and subdue their worst enemies, which inhabit within their own bosoms?



But these objects are still too limited for the human mind, which, being of celestial origin, swells with the divinest and most enlarged affections, and carrying its attention beyond kindred and acquaintance, extends its benevolent wishes to the most distant posterity. It views liberty and laws as the source of human happiness, and devotes itself, with the utmost alacrity, to their guardianship and protection. Toils, dangers, death itself, carry their charms, when we brave them for the public good, and ennoble that being, which we generously sacrifice for the interests of our country. Happy the man, whom indulgent fortune allows to pay to virtue what he owes to nature, and to make a generous gift of what must otherwise be ravished from him by cruel necessity?

In the true sage and patriot are united whatever can distinguish human nature, or elevate mortal man to a resemblance with the divinity. The softest benevolence, the most undaunted resolution, the tenderest sentiments, the most sublime love of virtue, all these animate successively his transported bosom. What satisfaction, when he looks within, to find the most turbulent passions tuned to just harmony and concord, and every jarring sound banished from this enchanting music! If the contemplation, even of inanimate beauty, be so delightful; if it ravishes the senses, even when the fair form is foreign to us: what must be the effects of moral beauty? And what influence must it have, when it embellishes our own mind, and is the result of our own reflection and industry?

*But where is the reward of virtue? And what recompence has nature provided for such important sacrifices, as those of*  
*life.*

*life and fortune, which we must often make to it?* Oh, sons of earth! Are you ignorant of the value of the celestial mistress? And do you meanly inquire for her portion, when you observe her genuine charms? But know, that nature has been indulgent to human weakness, and has not left this favourite child naked and unendowed. She has provided virtue of the richest dowry; but being careful, lest the allurements of interest should engage such suitors, as were insensible of the native worth of so divine a beauty, she has wisely provided, that this dowry can have no charms but in the eyes of those who are already transported with the love of virtue. GLORY is the portion of virtue, the sweet reward of honourable toils, the triumphant crown, which covers the thoughtful head of the disinterested patriot, or the dusty brow of the victorious warrior. Elevated by so sublime a prize, the man of virtue looks down with contempt on all the allurements of pleasure, and all the menaces of danger. Death itself loses its terrors, when he considers, that its dominion extends only over a part of him, and that, in spite of death and time, the rage of the elements, and the endless vicissitude of human affairs, he is assured of an immortal fame among all the sons of men.

There surely is a being who presides over the universe; and who, with infinite wisdom and power, has reduced the jarring elements into just order and proportion. Let speculative reasoners dispute, how far this beneficent being extends his care, and whether he prolongs our existence beyond the grave, in order to bestow on virtue its just reward, and render it fully triumphant. The man of morals, without deciding any thing on so dubious a subject, is satisfied with that portion which is



marked out to him by the supreme disposer of all things. Gratefully he accepts of that farther reward prepared for him; but if disappointed, he thinks not virtue an empty name: but justly esteeming it its own reward, he gratefully acknowledges the bounty of his creator, who, by calling him forth into existence, has thereby afforded him an opportunity of once acquiring so invaluable a possession.



## E S S A Y XVII.

## THE PLATONIST†.

TO some philosophers it appears matter of surprize, that all mankind, possessing the same nature, and being endowed with the same faculties, should yet differ so widely in their pursuits and inclinations, and that one should utterly condemn what is fondly sought after by another. To some it appears matter of still more surprize, that a man should differ so widely from himself at different times; and, after possession, reject with disdain what, before, was the object of all his vows and wishes. To me this feverish uncertainty and irresolution, in human conduct, seems altogether unavoidable; nor can a rational soul, made for the contemplation of the Supreme Being, and of his works, ever enjoy tranquillity or satisfaction, while detained in the ignoble pursuits of sensual pleasure or popular applause. The divinity is a boundless ocean of bliss and glory: Human minds are smaller streams, which arising at first from this ocean, seek still, amid all their wanderings, to return to it, and to lose themselves in that immensity of perfection. When checked in this natural course, by vice or folly, they become furious and enraged; and, swelling to a torrent, do then spread horror and devastation on the neighbouring plains.

† Or, the man of contemplation, and *philosophical* devotion.



In vain, by pompous praise and passionate expression, each recommends his own pursuit, and invites the credulous hearers to an imitation of his life and manners. The heart belies the countenance, and sensibly feels, even amid the highest success, the unsatisfactory nature of all those pleasures, which detain it from its true object. I examine the voluptuous man before enjoyment; I measure the vehemence of his desire, and the importance of his object; I find that all his happiness proceeds only from that hurry of thought which takes him from himself, and turns his view from his guilt and misery. I consider him a moment after; he has now enjoyed the pleasure, which he fondly sought after. The sense of his guilt and misery returns upon him with double anguish: His mind tormented with fear and remorse; his body depressed with disgust and satiety.

But a more august, at least a more haughty personage, presents himself boldly to our censure; and assuming the title of a philosopher and man of morals, offers to submit to the most rigid examination. He challenges with a visible, though concealed impatience, our approbation and applause; and seems offended, that we should hesitate a moment before we break out into admiration of his virtue. Seeing this impatience, I hesitate still more: I begin to examine the motives of his seeming virtue: But behold! ere I can enter upon this inquiry, he flings himself from me; and addressing his discourse to that crowd of heedless auditors, fondly abuses them by his magnificent pretensions.

O philosopher! thy wisdom is vain, and thy virtue unprofitable. Thou seekest the ignorant applauses of men, not the solid reflections of thy own conscience, or the more solid approbation

probation of that being, who, with one regard of his all-seeing eye, penetrates the universe. Thou surely art conscious of the hollowness of thy pretended probity, whilst calling thyself a citizen, a son, a friend, thou forgettest thy higher sovereign, thy true father, thy greatest benefactor. Where is the adoration due to such infinite perfection, whence every thing good and valuable is derived? Where is the gratitude, owing to thy creator, who called thee forth from nothing, who placed thee in all these relations to thy fellow-creatures, and requiring thee to fulfil the duty of each relation, forbids thee to neglect what thou owest to himself, the most perfect being, to whom thou art connected by the closest tie?

But thou art thyself thy own idol: Thou worshippest thy *imaginary* perfections: Or rather, sensible of thy *real* imperfections, thou seekest only to deceive the world, and to please thy fancy, by multiplying thy ignorant admirers. Thus, not contented with neglecting what is most excellent in the universe, thou desirest to substitute in his place what is most vile and contemptible.

Consider all the works of men's hands; all the inventions of human wit, in which thou affectest so nice a discernment: Thou wilt find, that the most perfect production still proceeds from the most perfect thought, and that 'tis MIND alone, which we admire, while we bestow our applause on the graces of a well proportioned statue, or the symmetry of a noble pile. The statuary, the architect comes still in view, and makes us reflect on the beauty of his art and contrivance, which from a heap of unformed matter, could extract such expressions and proportions. This superior beauty of thought

and :



and intelligence thou thyself acknowlegest, while thou inviteſt us to contemplate, in thy conduct, the harmony of affections, the dignity of ſentiments, and all thoſe graces of a mind, which chiefly merit our attention. But why ſtoppeſt thou ſhort? Seeſt thou nothing farther that is valuable? Amid thy rapturous applauſes of beauty and order, art thou ſtill ignorant where is to be found the moſt conſummate beauty? the moſt perfect order? Compare the works of art with thoſe of nature. The one are but imitations of the other. The nearer art approaches to nature the more perfect it is eſteemed. But ſtill, how wide are its neareſt approaches, and what an immenſe interval may be obſerved between them? Art copies only the outſide of nature, leaving the inward and more admirable ſprings and principles; as exceeding her imitation; as beyond her comprehension. Art copies only the minute productions of nature, deſpairing to reach that grandeur and magnificence, which are ſo aſtoniſhing in the maſterly works of her original. Can we then be ſo blind, as not to diſcover an intelligence and a deſign in the exquisite and moſt ſtupendous contrivance of the univerſe? Can we be ſo ſtupid, as not to feel the warmeſt raptures of worſhip and adoration, upon the contemplation of that intelligent being, ſo infinitely good and wiſe?

The moſt perfect happineſs, ſurely, muſt ariſe from the contemplation of the moſt perfect object. But what more perfect than beauty and virtue? And where is beauty to be found equal to that of the univerſe? Or virtue, which can be compared to the benevolence and juſtice of the Deity? If aught can diminifh the pleaſure of this contemplation, it muſt be

be either the narrowness of our faculties, which conceals from us the greatest part of these beauties and perfections; or the shortness of our lives, which allows not time sufficient to instruct us in them. But 'tis our comfort, that if we employ worthily the faculties here assigned us, they will be enlarged in another state of existence, so as to render us more suitable worshippers of our maker: And that the task, which can never be finished in time, will be the business of an eternity.





## E S S A Y XVIII.

## THE SCEPTIC.

I HAVE long entertained a great suspicion, with regard to the decisions of philosophers upon all subjects, and found in myself a greater inclination to dispute, than to assent to their conclusions. There is one mistake to which they seem liable, almost without exception; they confine too much their principles, and make no account of that vast variety, which nature has so much affected in all her operations. When a philosopher has once laid hold of a favourite principle, which perhaps accounts for many natural effects, he will apply the same principle over the whole creation, and reduce to it every phænomenon, though by the most violent and absurd reasoning. Our own mind being narrow and contracted, we cannot extend our conception to the variety and extent of nature; but imagine, that she is as much bounded in her operations, as we are in our speculations.

But if ever this infirmity of philosophers is to be suspected on any occasion, 'tis in their reasonings concerning human life, and the methods of attaining happiness. In that case, they are led astray, not only by the narrowness of their understandings, but also by that of their passions. Almost every one has a predominant inclination, to which all his other desires and affections,

tions submit, and which govern him, tho, perhaps, with some intervals, through the whole course of his life. 'Tis difficult for him to apprehend, that any thing, which appears totally indifferent to him, can ever give enjoyment to any person, or can possess charms, which altogether escape his observation. His own pursuits are always, in his account, the most engaging: The objects of his passion, the most valuable: And the road which he pursues, the only one that leads to happiness.

But would these prejudiced reasoners reflect a moment, there are many obvious instances and arguments, sufficient to undeceive them, and make them enlarge their maxims and principles. Do they not see the vast variety of inclinations and pursuits among our species, where each man seems fully satisfied with his own course of life, and would esteem it the greatest unhappiness to be confined to that of his neighbour? Do they not feel in themselves, that what pleases at one time, displeases at another, by the change of inclination; and that it is not in their power, by their utmost efforts, to recall that taste or appetite, which formerly bestowed charms on what now appears indifferent or disagreeable? What is the meaning therefore of those general preferences of the town or country life, of a life of action or one of pleasure, of retirement or society; when, besides the different inclinations of different men, every one's experience may convince him, that each of these kinds of life is agreeable in its turn, and that their variety or their judicious mixture chiefly contributes to the rendering all of them agreeable.

But shall this business be allowed to go altogether at adventures? And must a man consult only his humour and incli-



nation, in order to determine his course of life, without ever employing his reason to inform him what road is preferable, and leads most surely to happiness? Is there no difference then between one man's conduct and another?

I answer, There is a great difference. One man, following his inclinations, in chusing his course of life, may employ much surer means for succeeding than another, who is led by his inclination into the same course of life, and pursues the same object. *Are riches the chief object of your desires?* Acquire skill in your profession; be diligent in the exercise of it; enlarge the circle of your friends and acquaintance; avoid pleasure and expence; and never be generous, but with a view of gaining more than you could save by frugality. *Would you acquire the public esteem?* Guard equally against the extremes of arrogance and fawning. Let it appear that you set a value upon yourself, but without despising others. If you fall into either of the extremes, you either provoke man's pride by your insolence, or teach them to despise you by your timorous submission, and by the mean opinion which you seem to entertain of yourself.

These, you say, are the maxims of common prudence, and discretion; what every parent inculcates on his child, and what every man of sense pursues in the course of life, which he has chosen.—What is it then you desire more? Do you come to a philosopher, as to a *cunning man*, to learn something by magic or witchcraft, beyond what can be known by common prudence and discretion?—Yes; we come to a philosopher to be instructed, How we shall chuse our ends, more than the means for attaining these ends: We want to know what desires we shall

shall gratify, what passions we shall comply with, what appetites we shall indulge. As to the rest, we trust to common sense, and the general maxims of the world, for our instruction.

I am sorry then, I have pretended to be a philosopher: For I find your questions very perplexing; and am in danger, if my answer be too rigid and severe, of passing for a pedant and scholastic; if it be too easy and free, of being taken for a preacher of vice and immorality. However, to satisfy you, I shall deliver my opinion upon the matter, and only desire you to esteem it of as little consequence as I do myself. By that means you will neither think it worthy of your ridicule nor your anger.

If we can depend upon any principle, which we learn from philosophy, this, I think, may be considered as certain and undoubted, That there is nothing in itself, valuable or despicable, desirable or hateful, beautiful or deformed; but that these attributes arise from the particular constitution and fabric of human sentiments and affections. What seems the most delicious food to one animal, appears loathsome to another: What affects the feeling of one with delight, produces uneasiness to another. This is confessedly the case with regard to all the bodily senses: But if we examine the matter more accurately, we shall find that the same observation holds even where the mind concurs with the body, and mingles its sentiments with the exterior appetites.

Desire this passionate lover to give you a character of his mistress: He will tell you that he is at a loss for words to describe her charms, and will ask you very seriously if ever you was



acquainted with a goddess or an angel? If you answer that you never was: He will then say, That 'tis impossible for you to form a conception of such divine beauties as those which his charmer possesses; so complete a shape; such proportioned features; so engaging an air; such sweetness of disposition; such gaiety of humour. You can infer nothing, however, from all this discourse, but that the poor man is in love; and that the general appetite between the sexes, which nature has infused into all animals, is in him determined to a particular object by some qualities, which give him pleasure. The same divine creature, not only to a different animal, but also to a different man, appears a mere mortal being, and is beheld with the utmost indifference.

Nature has given all animals a like prejudice in favour of their offspring. As soon as the helpless infant sees the light, though in every other eye it appears a despicable and miserable creature, it is regarded by its fond parent with the utmost affection, and is preferred to every other object, however perfect and accomplished. The passion alone, arising from the original structure and formation of human nature, bestows a value on the most insignificant object.

We may push the same observation further, and may conclude, that even when the mind operates alone, and feeling the sentiments of blame or approbation, pronounces one object deformed and odious, another beautiful and amiable; I say, that even in this case, those qualities are not really in the objects, but belong entirely to the sentiments of that mind which blames or praises. I grant, that it will be more difficult to make this proposition evident, and as it were, palpable, to negligent

thinkers, because nature is more uniform in the sentiments of the mind than in most feelings of the body, and produces a nearer resemblance in the inward than in the outward part of human kind. There is something approaching to principles in mental taste; and critics can reason and dispute much more plausibly than cooks or perfumers. We may observe, however, That this uniformity among human kind, hinders not, but that there is a considerable diversity in the sentiments of beauty and worth, and that education, custom, prejudice, caprice, and humour frequently vary our taste of this kind. You will never convince a man, who is not accustomed to ITALIAN music, and has not an ear to follow its intricacies, that a SCOTS tune is not preferable. You have not even any single argument, beyond your own taste, which you can employ in your behalf: And to your antagonist, his particular taste will always appear a much more convincing argument to the contrary. If you be wise, each of you will allow, that the other may be in the right; and having many other instances of this diversity of taste, you will both confess, that beauty and worth are merely of a relative nature, and consist in an agreeable sentiment, produced by an object on a particular mind, according to the peculiar structure and constitution of that mind.

By this diversity of sentiment, observable in human kind, nature has, perhaps, intended to make us sensible of her authority, and let us see what surprizing changes she could produce on the passions and desires of mankind, merely by the change of their inward fabric, without any alteration on the objects. The vulgar may even be convinced by this argument: But men accustomed to thinking may draw a more convincing, at least a more general argument, from the very nature of the subject.



In the operation of reasoning, the mind does nothing but run over its objects, as they are supposed to stand in reality, without adding any thing to them, or diminishing any thing from them. If I examine the PTOLOMAIC and COPERNICAN systems, I endeavour only, by my enquiries, to know the real situation of the planets; that is, in other words, I endeavour to give them, in my mind or conception, the same relations which they bear towards each other in the heavens. To this operation of the mind, therefore, there seems to be always a real, though often an unknown standard, in the nature of things; nor is truth or falsehood variable by the various apprehensions of mankind. Though all human race should for ever conclude, that the sun moves, and the earth remains at rest, the sun stirs not an inch from his place for all these reasonings; and such conclusions are eternally false and erroneous.

But the case is not the same with the qualities of *beautiful and deformed, desirable and odious*, as with truth and falsehood. In the former case, the mind is not contented with merely surveying its objects, as they stand in themselves: It also feels a sentiment of delight or uneasiness, approbation or blame, consequent to that survey; and this sentiment determines it to pronounce the object *beautiful or deformed, desirable or odious*. Now, 'tis evident, that this sentiment must depend upon the particular fabric or structure of the mind, which enables such particular objects to operate in such a particular manner, and produces a sympathy or conformity between the mind and the objects. Vary the structure of the mind or inward organs, the sentiment no longer follows, though the objects remain the same. The sentiment being different from the object, and arising from its operation upon the organs of the mind, an alteration

teration upon the latter must vary the effect, nor can the same object, presented to a mind totally different, produce the same sentiment.

This conclusion every one is apt to form of himself, without much philosophy, where the sentiment is evidently distinguishable from the object. Who is not sensible, that power, and glory, and vengeance, are not desirable of themselves, but derive all their value from the structure of human passions, which begets a desire towards such particular objects? But with regard to beauty, whether natural or moral, the case is commonly supposed to be different. The agreeable quality is thought to lie in the object, not in the sentiment; and that merely because the sentiment is not so turbulent and violent as to distinguish itself, in an evident manner, from the perception of the object.

But a very little reflection suffices to distinguish them. A man may know exactly all the circles and ellipses of the COPERNICAN system, and all the irregular spirals of the PTOLOMAIC, without perceiving that the former is more beautiful than the latter. EUCLID has very fully explained every quality of the circle, but has not, in any proposition, said a word of its beauty. The reason is evident. Beauty is not a quality of the circle. It lies not in any part of the line *whose* parts are all equally distant from a common centre. It is only the effect, which that figure operates upon the mind, whose particular fabric or structure renders it susceptible of such sentiments. In vain would you look for it in the circle, or seek it, either by your senses, or by mathematical reasonings, in all the properties of that figure.



The mathematician, who took no other pleasure in reading VIRGIL, but that of examining ENEAS's voyage by the map, might understand perfectly the meaning of every Latin word, imployed by that divine author; and consequently, might have a distinct idea of the whole narration. He would even have a more distinct idea of it, than they could have who had not studied so exactly the geography of the poem. He knew, therefore, every thing in the poem: But he was ignorant of its beauty; because the beauty, properly speaking, lies not in the poem, but in the sentiment or taste of the reader. And where a man has no such delicacy of temper, as to make him feel this sentiment, he must be ignorant of the beauty though possessed of the science and understanding of an angel\*.

The inference upon the whole is, that it is not from the value or worth of the object, which any person pursues, that we can determine his enjoyment, but merely from the passion with which he pursues it, and the success which he meets with in his pursuit. Objects have absolutely no worth or value in themselves. They derive their worth merely from the passion. If

\* Were I not afraid of appearing too philosophical, I should remind my reader of that famous doctrine, supposed to be fully proved in modern times, "That tastes and colours, and all other sensible qualities, lie not in the bodies, but merely in the senses." The case is the same with beauty and deformity, virtue and vice. This doctrine, however, takes off no more from the reality of the latter qualities, than from that of the former; nor need it give any umbrage either to critics or moralists. Though colours were allowed to lie only in the eye, would dyers or painters ever be less regarded or esteemed? There is a sufficient uniformity in the senses and feelings of mankind, to make all these qualities the objects of art and reasoning, and to have the greatest influence on life and manners. And as 'tis certain, that the discovery above-mentioned in natural philosophy, makes no alteration on action and conduct; why should a like discovery in moral philosophy make any alteration?

that

that be strong, and steady, and successful, the person is happy. It cannot reasonably be doubted, but a little miss, dressed in a new gown for a dancing-school ball, receives as complete enjoyment as the greatest orator, who triumphs in the splendour of his eloquence, while he governs the passions and resolutions of a numerous assembly.

All the difference, therefore, between one man and another, with regard to life, consists either in the *passion*, or in the *enjoyment*: And these differences are sufficient to produce the wide extremes of happiness and misery.

To be happy, the *passion* must neither be too violent nor too remiss. In the first case, the mind is in a perpetual hurry and tumult; in the second, it sinks into a disagreeable indolence and lethargy.

To be happy, the passion must be benign and social, not rough or fierce. The affections of the latter kind are not near so agreeable to the feeling, as those of the former. Who will compare rancour and animosity, envy and revenge, to friendship, benignity, clemency and gratitude?

To be happy, the passion must be cheerful and gay, not gloomy and melancholy. A propensity to hope and joy is real riches: One to fear and sorrow, real poverty.

Some passions or inclinations, in the *enjoyment* of their object, are not so steady or constant as others, nor convey such durable pleasure and satisfaction. *Philosophical devotion*, for instance, like the enthusiasm of a poet, is the transitory effect of high spirits, great leisure, a fine genius, and a habit of study and con-



templation: But notwithstanding all these circumstances, an abstracted, invisible object, like that which *natural* religion alone presents to us, cannot long actuate the mind, or be of any moment in life. To render the passion of continuance, we must find some method of affecting the senses and imagination, and must embrace some *historical* as well as *philosophical* accounts of the divinity. Popular superstitions and observances are even found to be of use in this particular.

Though the tempers of men be very different, yet we may safely pronounce in general, that a life of pleasure cannot support itself so long as one of business, but is much more subject to satiety and disgust. The amusements, which are the most durable, have all a mixture of application and attention in them; such as gaming and hunting. And in general, business and action fill up the great vacancies of human life.

But where the temper is the best disposed for any *enjoyment*, the object is often wanting: And in this respect, the passions, which pursue *external* objects, contribute not so much to happiness, as those which rest in ourselves; since we are neither so certain of attaining such objects, nor so secure of possessing them. A passion for learning is preferable, with regard to happiness, to one for riches.

Some men are possessed of great strength of mind; and even when they pursue *external* objects, are not much affected by a disappointment, but renew their application and industry with the greatest cheerfulness. Nothing contributes more to happiness than this turn of mind.

According

According to this short and imperfect sketch of human life; the happiest disposition of mind is the *virtuous*; or, in other words, that which leads to action and employment, renders us sensible to the social passions, steels the heart against the assaults of fortune, reduces the affections to a just moderation, makes our own thoughts an entertainment to us, and inclines us rather to the pleasures of society and conversation, than to those of the senses. This, in the mean time, must be obvious to the most careless reasoner, that all dispositions of mind are not alike favourable to happiness, and that one passion or humour may be extremely desirable, while another is equally disagreeable. And indeed, all the difference between the conditions of life depends upon the mind; nor is there any one situation of affairs, in itself, preferable to another. Good and ill, both natural and moral, are entirely relative to human sentiment and affection. No man would ever be unhappy, could he alter his feelings. PROTEUS-like, he would elude all attacks, by the continual alterations of his shape and form.

But of this resource nature has, in a great measure, deprived us. The fabric and constitution of our mind no more depends on our choice, than that of our body. The generality of men have not even the smallest notion, that any alteration in this respect can ever be desirable. As a stream necessarily follows the several inclinations of the ground, on which it runs; so are the ignorant and thoughtless part of mankind actuated by their natural propensities. Such are effectually excluded from all pretensions to philosophy, and the *medicine of the mind*, so much boasted. But even upon the wise and thoughtful, nature has a prodigious influence; nor is it always in a man's power, by the utmost art and industry, to correct his temper, and attain  
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that virtuous character, to which he aspires. The empire of philosophy extends over a few; and with regard to these too, her authority is very weak and limited. Men may well be sensible of the value of virtue, and may desire to attain it; but 'tis not always certain, that they will be successful in their wishes.

Whoever considers, without prejudice, the course of human actions, will find, that mankind are almost entirely guided by constitution and temper, and that general maxims have little influence, but so far as they affect our taste or sentiment. If a man have a lively sense of honour and virtue, with moderate passions, his conduct will always be conformable to the rules of morality; or if he depart from them, his return will be easy and expeditious. But, on the other hand, where one is born of so perverse a frame of mind, of so callous and insensible a disposition, as to have no relish for virtue and humanity, no sympathy with his fellow creatures, no desire of esteem and applause; such a one must be allowed entirely incurable, nor is there any remedy in philosophy. He reaps no satisfaction but from low and sensual objects, or from the indulgence of malignant passions: He feels no remorse to controul his vicious inclinations: He has not even that sense or taste, which is requisite to make him desire a better character: For my part, I know not how I should address myself to such a one, or by what arguments I should endeavour to reform him. Should I tell him of the inward satisfaction which results from laudable and humane actions, the delicate pleasures of disinterested love and friendship, the lasting enjoyments of a good name and an established character, he might still reply, that these were, perhaps, pleasures to such as were susceptible to them; but that, for his

part,

part, he finds himself of a quite different turn and disposition. I must repeat it; my philosophy affords no remedy in such a case, nor could I do any thing but lament this person's unhappy condition. But then I ask, If any other philosophy can afford a remedy; or if it be possible, by any system, to render all mankind virtuous, however perverse may be their natural frame of mind? Experience will soon convince us of the contrary; and I will venture to affirm, that perhaps, the chief benefit, which results from philosophy, arises in an indirect manner, and proceeds more from its secret, insensible influence, than from its immediate application.

'Tis certain, that a serious attention to the sciences and liberal arts, softens and humanizes the temper, and cherishes those fine emotions, in which true virtue and honour consists. It rarely, very rarely happens, that a man of taste and learning is not, at least, an honest man, whatever frailties may attend him. The bent of his mind to speculative studies must mortify in him the passions of interest and ambition, and must, at the same time, give him a greater sensibility of all the decencies and duties of life. He feels more fully a moral distinction in characters and manners, nor is his sense of this kind diminished, but, on the contrary, it is much encreased, by his speculations.

Besides such insensible changes upon the temper and disposition, 'tis highly probable, that others may be produced by study and application. The prodigious effects of education may convince us, that the mind is not altogether stubborn and inflexible, but will admit of many alterations from its original make and structure. Let a man propose to himself the model



of a character, which he approves of: Let him be well acquainted with those particulars, in which his own character deviates from this model: Let him keep a constant watch over himself, and bend his mind, by a continual effort, from the vices, towards the virtues; and I doubt not but, in time, he will find, in his temper, an alteration to the better.

Habit is another powerful means of reforming the mind, and implanting in it good dispositions and inclinations. A man who continues in a course of sobriety and temperance, will hate riot and disorder: If he engage in business or study, indolence will seem a punishment to him: If he constrain himself to practise beneficence and affability, he will soon abhor all instances of pride and violence. Where one is thoroughly convinced that the virtuous course of life is preferable; if he has but resolution enough, for some time, to impose a violence on himself; his reformation need not be despaired of. The misfortune is, that this conviction and this resolution never can have place, unless a man be, before-hand, tolerably virtuous.

Here then is the chief triumph of art and philosophy: It insensibly refines the temper, and it points out to us those dispositions which we should endeavour to attain, by a constant *bent* of mind, and by repeated *habit*. Beyond this I cannot acknowledge it to have great influence; and I must entertain doubts concerning all those exhortations and consolations, which are in such vogue among all speculative reasoners.

We have already observed, that no objects are, of themselves, desirable or odious, valuable or despicable; but that objects acquire these qualities from the particular character and constitution of the mind, which surveys them. To diminish therefore,

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or augment any person's value for an object, to excite or moderate his passions, there are no direct arguments or reasons, which can be employed with any force or influence. The catching flies, like DOMITIAN, if it give more pleasure, is preferable to the hunting wild beasts, like WILLIAM RUFUS, or conquering kingdoms, like ALEXANDER.

But though the value of every object can be determined only by the sentiments or passions of every individual, we may observe, that the passions, in pronouncing their verdict, consider not the object simply, as it is in itself, but survey it with all the circumstances, which attend it. A man transported with joy, on account of his possessing a diamond, confines not his view to the glittering stone before him: He also considers its rarity, and from thence chiefly arises his pleasure and exultation. Here therefore a philosopher may step in, and suggest particular views and considerations, and circumstances, which otherwise would have escaped us; and, by that means, he may either moderate or excite any particular passion.

It may seem unreasonable absolutely to deny the authority of philosophy in this respect: but it must be confessed, that there lies this strong presumption against it, that if these views be natural and obvious, they would have occurred of themselves, without the assistance of philosophy; if they be not natural, they never can have any influence on the affections. *These* are of a very delicate nature, and cannot be forced or constrained by the utmost art or industry. A consideration, which we seek for on purpose, which we enter into with difficulty, which we retain with care and attention, can never produce those genuine and durable movements of passion, which are the result of na-



ture, and the constitution of the mind. A man may as well pretend to cure himself of love, by viewing his mistress through the *artificial* medium of a microscope, or prospect, and beholding there the coarseness of her skin, and monstrous disproportion of her features, as hope to excite or moderate any passion by the *artificial* arguments of a SENECA or an EPICTE-TUS. The remembrance of the natural aspect and situation of the objects will, in both cases, still recur upon him. The reflections of philosophy are too subtle and distant to take place in common life, or eradicate any affection. The air is too fine to breathe in where it is above the winds and clouds of the atmosphere.

Another defect of those refined reflections, which philosophy presents to us, is, that commonly they cannot diminish or extinguish our vicious passions, without diminishing or extinguishing such as are virtuous, and rendering the mind totally indifferent and unactive. They are for the most part, general, and are applicable to all our affections. In vain do we hope to direct their influence only to one side. If by incessant study and meditation we have rendered them very intimate and present to us, they will operate throughout, and spread an universal insensibility over the mind. When we destroy the nerves, we extinguish the sense of pleasure, together with that of pain.

It will be easy, by one glance of the eye, to find one or other of these defects in most of those philosophical reflections, so much celebrated both in ancient and modern times. *Let not the injuries or violence of men, say the philosophers\*, ever discompose you by anger or hatred. Would you be angry at the ape for*

\* PLUT. *de ira cobibenda.*

*its malice, or the tyger for its ferocity?* This reflection leads us into a bad opinion of human nature, and must extinguish the social affections. It tends also to remove all remorse for a man's own crimes, when he considers, that vice is as natural to mankind, as the particular instincts to brute creatures.

*All ills arise from the order of the universe, which is absolutely perfect. Would you wish to disturb so divine an order for the sake of your own particular interest? What if the ills I suffer arise from malice or oppression? But the vices and imperfections of men are also comprehended in the order of the universe.*

*If plagues and earthquakes break not heav'n's design,  
Why then a BORGIA or a CATILINE?*

Let this be allowed; and my own vices will also be a part of the same order.

To one who said, that none was happy, who was not above opinion, a SPARTAN replied, *then none are happy but knaves and robbers* \*.

*Man is born to be miserable; and is he surprized at any particular misfortune? And can he give way to sorrow and lamentation upon account of any disaster? Yes: He very reasonably laments, that he should be born to be miserable. Your consolation presents a hundred ills for one, that you pretend to ease him of.*

*You should always have before your eyes death, disease, poverty, blindness, exile, calumny, and infamy, as ills which are incident to human nature. When any one of these ills falls to your*

\* PLUT. *Lacón. Apophtheg.*



lot, you will bear it the better that you have laid your account with it. I answer, If we confine ourselves to a general and distant reflection on the ills of human life, *that* can have no effect to prepare us for them. If by close and intense meditation we render them present and intimate to us, *that* is the true secret to poison all our pleasures, and render us perpetually miserable.

*Your sorrow is fruitless, and will not change the course of destiny.* Very true : And for that very reason I am sorry.

Cicero's consolation for deafness is somewhat curious. *How many languages are there, says he, which you do not understand? The PUNIC, SPANISH, GALLIC, ÆGYPTIAN, &c. With regard to all these, you are as if you were deaf, and yet you are indifferent about the matter. Is it then so great a misfortune to be deaf to one language more \* ?*

I like better the repartee of ANTIPATER the CYRENAIC, when some women were condoling with him for his blindness : *What ! says he, Do you think there are no pleasures in the dark ?*

*Nothing can be more destructive, says FONTENELLE, to ambition, and the passion for conquest, than the true system of astronomy. What a poor thing is even the whole globe in comparison of the infinite extent of nature ?* This consideration is evidently too distant to have any effect. And if it had any, would it not destroy patriotism as well as ambition ? The same gallant author adds with some reason, that the bright eyes of the ladies are the only objects, which lose nothing of their lustre or value from the most extensive views of astronomy and philosophy, but stand

\* Tusc. Quæst. Lib. V.]

proof against every system. Would philosophers advise us to limit our affection to them?

*Exile, says PLUTARCH to a friend in banishment, is no evil: Mathematicians tell us, that the whole earth is but as a point, compared to the heavens. To change one's country, then, is little more than to remove from one street to another. Man is not a plant, rooted to a certain spot of earth: All soils and all climates are alike suited to him\*.* These topics are admirable, could they fall only into the hands of banished persons. But what if they come also to the knowledge of those employed in public affairs, and destroy all their attachment to their native country? Or will they operate like the quack's medicine, which is equally good for a diabetes and a dropsy?

'Tis certain, were a superior being thrust into a human body, that the whole of life would to him appear so mean, contemptible and puerile, that he never could be induced to take part in any thing, and would scarcely give attention to what passes around him. To engage him to such a condescension as to play even the part of a PHILIP with zeal and alacrity, would be much more difficult than to constrain the same PHILIP, after having been a king and a conqueror during fifty years, to mend old shoes with proper care and attention; the occupation which LUCIAN assigns him in the infernal regions. Now all the same topics of disdain towards human affairs, which could operate on this supposed being, occur also to a philosopher; but being, in some measure, disproportioned to human capacity, and not being fortified by the experience of any thing better, they make not a full impression on him. He sees, but he feels not suffi-

\* *De exilio.*



ciently their truth : and is always a sublime philosopher, when he needs not ; that is, as long as nothing disturbs him, or rouses his affections. While others play, he wonders at their keenness and ardour ; but he no sooner puts in his own stake, than he is commonly transported with the same passions, which he had so much condemned while he remained a simple spectator.

There are chiefly two considerations to be met with in books of philosophy, from which any important effect is to be expected, and that because these considerations are drawn from common life, and occur upon the most superficial view of human affairs. When we reflect on the shortness and uncertainty of life, how despicable seem all our pursuits of happiness ? And even, if we would extend our concern beyond our own life, how frivolous appear our most enlarged and most generous projects ; when we consider the incessant changes and revolutions of human affairs, by which laws and learning, books and governments are hurried away by time, as by a rapid stream, and are lost in the immense ocean of matter ? Such a reflection certainly tends to mortify all our passions : But does it not thereby counterwork the artifice of nature, who has happily deceived us into an opinion, that human life is of some importance ? And may not such a reflection be employed with success by voluptuous reasoners, in order to lead us from the paths of action and virtue, into the flowery fields of indolence and pleasure ?

We are informed by THUCYDIDES, that, during the famous plague of ATHENS, when death seemed present to every one, a dissolute mirth and gaiety prevailed among the people, who exhorted one another to make the most of life as long as it endured. The same observation is made by BOCCACE with regard

gard to the plague of FLORENCE. A like principle makes soldiers, during war, to be more addicted to riot and expence, than any other race of men. Present pleasure is always of importance; and whatever diminishes the importance of all other objects must bestow on it an additional influence and value.

The *second* philosophical consideration, which may often have an influence on the affections, is derived from a comparison of our own condition with the condition of others. This comparison we are continually making, even in common life; but the misfortune is, that we are apt rather to compare our situation with that of our superiors, than with that of our inferiors. A philosopher corrects this natural infirmity, by turning his view to the other side, in order to render himself easy in the situation in which fortune has placed him. There are few people, who are not susceptible of some consolation from this reflection, though to a very good natured man, the view of human miseries should rather produce sorrow than comfort, and add to his lamentations for his own misfortunes a deep compassion for those of others. Such is the imperfection, even of the best of these philosophical topics of consolation \*.

I shall

\* The Sceptic, perhaps, carries the matter too far, when he limits all philosophical topics and reflections to these two. There seem to be others, whose truth is undeniable, and whose natural tendency is to tranquillize and soften all the passions. Philosophy greedily seizes these, studies them, weighs them, commits them to the memory, and familiarizes them to the mind: and their influence on tempers, which are thoughtful, gentle, and moderate, may be considerable. But what is their influence, you will say, if the temper be antecedently disposed after the same manner to which they pretend to form it? They may, at least, fortify that temper, and furnish it with views, by which it may entertain and nourish itself. Here are a few examples of such philosophical reflections.

1. Is



I shall conclude this subject with observing, That though virtue be undoubtedly the best choice, when it is attainable; yet such is the disorder and confusion of human affairs, that no perfect œconomy or regular distribution of happiness or misery is ever,

1. Is it not certain, that every condition has concealed ills? Then why envy any body?

2. Every one has known ills; and there is a compensation throughout. Why not be contented with the present?

3. Custom deadens the sense both of the good and the ill, and levels every thing.

4. Health and humour all. The rest of little consequence, except these be affected.

5. How many other goods have I? Then why be vexed for one ill?

6. How many are happy in the condition of which I complain? How many envy me?

7. Every good must be paid for: Fortune by labour, favour by flattery. Would I keep the price, yet have the commodity?

8. Expect not too great happiness in life. Human nature admits it not.

9. Propose not a happiness too complicated. But does that depend on me? Yes: The first choice does. Life is like a game: One may choose the game: And passion, by degrees, seizes the proper object.

10. Anticipate by your hopes and fancy future consolation, which time infallibly brings to every affliction.

11. I desire to be rich. Why? That I may possess many fine objects; houses, gardens, equipage, &c. How many fine objects does nature offer to every one without expence? If enjoyed, sufficient. If not: See the effect of custom or of temper, which would soon take off the relish of the riches.

12. I desire fame. Let this occur: If I act well, I shall have the esteem of all my acquaintance. And what is all the rest to me?

These reflections are so obvious, that 'tis a wonder they occur not to every man: So convincing, that 'tis a wonder they persuade not every man. But perhaps they do occur

ever, in this life, to be expected. Not only the goods of fortune, and the endowments of the body (both which are of great importance) not only these advantages, I say, are unequally divided between the virtuous and vicious, but even the mind itself partakes, in some degree, of this disorder, and the most worthy character, by the very oeconomy of the passions, enjoys not always the highest felicity.

'Tis observable, that though every bodily disease or pain proceeds from some disorder in the parts, yet the pain is not always proportioned to the disorder; but is greater or less, according to the greater or less sensibility of the part, upon which the noxious humours exert their influence. A *tooth-ach* produces more violent convulsions of pain than a *phthisis* or a *dropfy*. In like manner, with regard to the constitution of the mind, we may observe, that all vice is indeed pernicious; but yet the disturbance or pain is not measured out by nature with exact proportion to the degrees of vice, nor is the man of highest virtue, even abstracting from external accidents, always the

occur to and persuade most men; when they consider human life, by a general and calm survey: But where any real, affecting incident happens; when passion is awakened, fancy agitated, example draws, and counsel urges; the philosopher is lost in the man, and he searches in vain for that persuasion, which before seemed so firm and unshaken. What remedy for this inconvenience? Assist yourself by a frequent perusal of the entertaining moralists: Have recourse to the learning of PLUTARCH, the imagination of LUCIAN, the eloquence of CICERO, the wit of SENECA, the gaiety of MONTAIGNE, the sublimity of SHAFTESBURY. Moral precepts, so couched, strike deep, and fortify the mind against the illusions of passion. But trust not altogether to external aid: By habit and study acquire that philosophic temper, which both gives force to reflection, and by rendering a great part of your happiness independant, takes off the edge from all disorderly passions, and tranquilizes the mind. Despise not these helps; but confide not too much in them neither: unless nature has been favourable in the temper, with which she has endowed you.



most happy. A gloomy and melancholy disposition is certainly, *to our sentiments*, a vice or imperfection; but as it may be accompanied with great sense of honour and great integrity, it may be found in very worthy characters; though 'tis sufficient alone to imbitter life, and render the person affected with it compleatly miserable. On the other hand, a selfish villain may possess a spring and alacrity of temper, a certain *gaiety of heart*, which is indeed a good quality, but which is rewarded much beyond its merit, and when attended with good fortune, will compensate the uneasiness and remorse arising from all the other vices.

I shall add, as an observation to the same purpose, that if a man be liable to a vice or imperfection, it may often happen, that a good quality, which he possesses with it, will render him more miserable than if he were completely vicious. A person of such imbecility of temper, as to be easily broke by affliction, is more unhappy for being endowed with a generous and friendly disposition, which gives him a lively concern for others, and exposes him the more to fortune and accidents. A sense of shame, in an imperfect character, is certainly a virtue, but produces great uneasiness and remorse, from which the abandoned villain is entirely free. A very amorous complexion, with a heart incapable of friendship, is happier than the same excess in love, with a generosity of temper, which transports a man beyond himself, and renders him a total slave to the object of his passion.

In a word, human life is more governed by fortune than by reason; is to be regarded more as a dull pastime than as a serious occupation; and is more influenced by particular humour than

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by general principles. Shall we engage ourselves in it with passion and anxiety? It is not worthy of so much concern. Shall we be indifferent about what happens? We lose all the pleasure of the game by our phlegm and carelessness. While we are reasoning concerning life, life is gone; and death, though *perhaps* they receive him differently, yet treats alike the fool and the philosopher. To reduce life to exact rule and method, is commonly a painful, oft a fruitless occupation: And is it not also a proof, that we overvalue the prize for which we contend? Even to reason so carefully concerning it, and to fix with accuracy its just idea, would be over-valuing it, were it not that, to some tempers, this occupation is one of the most amusing, in which life could possibly be employed.



## E S S A Y XIX.

## OF POLYGAMY AND DIVORCES.

A S marriage is an engagement entered into by mutual consent, and has for its end the propagation of the species, 'tis evident, that it must be susceptible of all the variety of conditions, which consent establishes, provided they be not contrary to this end.

A man, in conjoining himself to a woman, is bound to her according to the terms of his engagement: In begetting children, he is bound, by all the ties of nature and humanity, to provide for their subsistence and education. When he has performed these two parts of duty, no being can reproach him with injustice or injury. And as the terms of his engagement as well as the methods of subsisting his offspring, may be very various, 'tis mere superstition to imagine, that marriage can be entirely uniform, and will admit only of one mode or form. Did not human laws restrain the natural liberty of men, every particular marriage would be as different, as contracts or bargains of any other kind or species.

As circumstances vary, and the laws propose different advantages, we find, that, in different times and places, they impose different conditions on this important contract. In TONQUIN  
'tis

'tis usual for the sailors, when the ships come into the harbour, to marry for the season; and, notwithstanding this precarious engagement, they are assured, 'tis said, of the strictest fidelity to their bed, as well as in the whole management of their affairs, from those temporary spouses.

I cannot, at present, recollect my authorities; but I have somewhere read, That the republic of ATHENS having lost many of its citizens by war and pestilence, allowed every man to marry two wives, in order the sooner to repair the waste which had been made by these calamities. The poet EURIPIDES happened to be coupled to two noisy Vixens, who so plagued him with their jealousies and quarrels, that he became ever after a professed *woman-hater*; and is the only theatrical writer, perhaps the only poet, who ever entertained an aversion against the whole sex.

In that agreeable romance, called *the History of the SEVARAMBIANS*, where a great many men and a few women are supposed to be shipwrecked on a desert coast; the captain of the troop, in order to obviate those endless quarrels which arose, regulates their marriages after the following manner: he takes a handsome female to himself alone; assigns one to every couple of inferior officers; and to five of the lowest rank he gives one wife in common. Could the greatest legislator, in such circumstances, have contrived matters with greater wisdom?

The ancient BRITONS had a very singular kind of marriage, which is to be met with among no other people. Any number of them, as ten or a dozen, joined in a society together, which was perhaps requisite for mutual defence in those barbarous times. In order to link this society the closer, they took an  
equal



equal number of wives in common, and whatever children were born, were reputed to belong to all of them, and were accordingly provided for by the whole community.

Among the inferior creatures, nature herself, being the supreme legislator, prescribes all the laws which regulate their marriages, and varies those laws according to the different circumstances of the creature. Where she furnishes, with ease, food and defence to the new-born animal, the present embrace terminates the marriage; and the care of the offspring is committed entirely to the female. Where the food is of more difficult purchase, the marriage continues for one season, till the common progeny can provide for itself; and then the union immediately dissolves, and leaves each of the parties free to enter into a new engagement at the ensuing season. But nature having endowed man with reason, has not so exactly regulated every article of his marriage contract, but has left him to adjust them, by his own prudence, according to his particular circumstances and situation. Municipal laws are a supply to the wisdom of each individual; and at the same time, by restraining the natural liberty of men, make the private interest submit to the interest of the public. All regulations, therefore, on this head are equally lawful, and equally conformable to the principles of nature; though they are not all equally convenient, or equally useful to society. The laws may allow of polygamy, as among the *Eastern* nations; or of voluntary divorces, as among the GREEKS and ROMANS; or they may confine one man to one woman; during the whole course of their lives, as among the modern EUROPEANS. It may not be disagreeable to consider the advantages and disadvantages which result from each of these institutions.

The advocates for polygamy may recommend it as the only effectual remedy for the furies and disorders of love, and the only expedient for freeing men from that slavery to the females, which the natural violence of our passions has imposed on us. By this means alone can we regain our right of sovereignty; and, satiating our appetite, re-establish the authority of reason in our minds, and, by consequence, our own authority in our families. Man, like a weak sovereign, being unable to support himself against the wiles and intrigues of his subjects, must play one faction against another, and become absolute by the mutual jealousies of the females. *To divide and to govern* is an universal maxim; and by neglecting it, the EUROPEANS undergo a more grievous and a more ignominious slavery than the TURKS or PERSIANS, who are subjected indeed to a sovereign, that lies at a distance from them, but in their domestic affairs rule with an uncontrollable sway. An honest TURK, who should come from his seraglio, where every one trembles before him, would be surprized to see SYLVIA in her drawing-room, adored by all the beaux and pretty fellows about town, and he would certainly take her for some mighty despotic queen, surrounded by her guard of obsequious slaves and eunuchs.

On the other hand, it may be urged with better reason, that this sovereignty of the male is a real usurpation, and destroys that nearness of rank, not to say equality, which nature has established between the sexes. We are, by nature, their lovers, their friends, their patrons: Would we willingly change such endearing appellations, for the barbarous titles of master and tyrant?



In what capacity shall we gain by this inhuman proceeding? As lovers, or as husbands? The *lover*, is totally annihilated; and courtship, the most agreeable scene in human life, can no longer have place, where women have not the free disposal of themselves, but are bought and sold, like the meanest animals. The *husband* is as little a gainer, having found the admirable secret of extinguishing every part of love, except its jealousy. There is no rose without its thorn; but he must be a foolish wretch indeed, who throws away the rose and preserves only the thorn.

I would not willingly insist upon it as an advantage in our EUROPEAN customs, what was observed by MEHEMET EFFENDI the last TURKISH ambassador in FRANCE. *We TURKS*, says he, *are great simpletons in comparison of the Christians. We are at the expence and trouble of keeping a seraglio, each in his own house: But you ease yourselves of this burden, and have your seraglio in your friends houses.* The known virtue of our BRITISH ladies frees them sufficiently from this imputation: And the TURK himself, had he travelled among us, must have owned, that our free commerce with the fair sex, more than any other invention, embellishes, enlivens, and polishes society.

But the ASIATIC manners are as destructive to friendship as to love. Jealousy excludes men from all intimacies and familiarities with each other. No man dares bring his friend to his house or table, lest he bring a lover to his numerous wives. Hence all over the east, each family is as separate from another, as if they were so many distinct kingdoms. No wonder then, that SOLOMON, living like an eastern prince, with his seven hundred

hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, without one friend, could write so pathetically concerning the vanity of the world. Had he tried the secret of one wife or mistress, a few friends, and a great many companions, he might have found life somewhat more agreeable. Destroy love and friendship; what remains in the world worth accepting?

The bad education of children, especially children of condition, is another unavoidable consequence of these eastern institutions. Those, who pass all the early part of life among slaves, are only qualified to be, themselves, slaves and tyrants; and in every future intercourse, either with their inferiors or superiors, are apt to forget the natural equality of mankind. What attention, too, can it be supposed a parent, whose seraglio affords him fifty sons, will give to the instilling principles of morality or science into a progeny, with whom he himself is scarcely acquainted, and whom he loves with so divided an affection? Barbarism, therefore, appears, from reason as well as experience, to be the inseparable concomitant of polygamy.

To render polygamy more odious, I need not recount the frightful effects of jealousy, and the constraint in which it holds the fair-sex all over the east. In those countries men are not allowed to have any commerce with the females, not even physicians, when sickness may be supposed to have extinguished all wanton passions in the bosoms of the fair, and, at the same time, has rendered them unfit objects of desire. *TOURNEFORT* tells us, That when he was brought into the *grand seraglio* as a physician, he was not a little surprized, in looking along a gallery, to see a great number of naked arms, standing out from the sides of the room. He could not imagine



what this could mean; till he was told, that those arms belonged to bodies, which he must cure, without knowing any more about them, than what he could learn from the arms. He was not allowed to ask a question of the patient, or even of her attendants, lest he might find it necessary to enquire concerning circumstances, which the delicacy of the seraglio allows not to be revealed. Hence the physicians in the east pretend to know all diseases from the pulse; as our quacks in EUROPE undertake to cure a person merely from seeing his water. I suppose, had Monsieur TOURNEFORT been of this latter kind, he would not, in CONSTANTINOPLE, have been allowed by the jealous TURKS to be furnished with materials requisite for exercising his art.

In another country, where polygamy is also allowed, they render their wives cripples, and make their feet of no use to them, in order to confine them to their own houses. But it will, perhaps, appear strange, that in an EUROPEAN country, where polygamy is not allowed, jealousy can yet be carried to such a height, that 'tis indecent so much as to suppose, that a woman of rank can have feet or legs. A SPANIARD is jealous of the very thoughts of those who approach his wife; and, if possible, will prevent his being dishonoured, even by the wantonness of imagination. Witness the following story, which we have from very good authority\*. When the mother of the late king of SPAIN was on her road towards MADRID, she passed through a little town in SPAIN, famous for its manufactory of gloves and stockings. The honest magistrates of the place thought they could not better express their joy for the

\* *Memoires de la cour d'ESPAGNE par Madame d'AUNOY.*

reception of their new queen, than by presenting her with a sample of those commodities, for which alone their town was remarkable. The *major-domo*, who conducted the princess, received the gloves very graciously: But when the stockings were presented, he flung them away with great indignation, and severely reprimanded the magistrates for this egregious piece of indecency. *Know*, says he, *that a queen of SPAIN has no legs*. The poor young queen, who, at that time, understood the language but imperfectly, and had been often frightened with stories of SPANISH jealousy, imagined that they were to cut off her legs. Upon which she fell a crying, and begged them to conduct her back to GERMANY; for that she never could endure that operation: And it was with some difficulty they could appease her. PHILIP IV. is said never in his life to have laughed heartily, but at the recital of this story.

If a SPANISH lady must not be supposed to have legs, what must be supposed of a TURKISH lady? She must not be supposed to have a being at all. Accordingly, 'tis esteemed a piece of rudeness and indecency at CONSTANTINOPLE, ever to make mention of a man's wives before him\*. In EUROPE, 'tis true, fine bred people make it also a rule never to talk of their wives: But the reason is not founded on our jealousy. I suppose it is because we should be apt, were it not for this rule, to become troublesome to company, by talking too much of them.

The author of the PERSIAN letters has given a different reason for this polite maxim. *Men*, says he, *never care to men-*

\* *Memoires de Marquis d'ARGENS.*



*tion their wives in company, lest they should talk of them before people, who are better acquainted with them than themselves.*

Having rejected polygamy, and matched one man with one woman, let us now consider what duration we shall assign to their union, and whether we shall admit of those voluntary divorces, which were in use among the GREEKS and ROMANS. They who would defend this practice, may employ the following reasons.

How often does disgust and aversion arise after marriage, from the most trivial accidents, or from an incompatibility of humour; where time, instead of curing the wounds proceeding from mutual injuries, festers them every day the more, by new quarrels and reproaches? Let us separate hearts, which are not made for each other. Each of them may, perhaps, find another, for which it is better fitted. At least, nothing can be more cruel, than to preserve by violence, an union, which, at first, was made by mutual love, and is now, in effect, dissolved by mutual hatred.

But the liberty of divorces is not only a cure to hatred and domestic quarrels: It is also an admirable preservative against them, and the only secret for keeping alive that love, which first united the married couple. The heart of man delights in liberty: The very image of constraint is grievous to it: When you would confine it by violence, to what would otherwise have been its choice, the inclination immediately changes, and desire is turned into aversion. If the public interest will not allow us to enjoy in polygamy that *variety*, which is so agreeable in love; at least, deprive us not of that liberty, which

which is so essentially requisite. In vain you tell me, that I had my choice of the person, with whom I would conjoin myself. I had my choice, 'tis true, of my prison; but this is but a small comfort, since it must still be a prison.

Such are the arguments, which may be urged in favour of divorces: But there seem to be these three unanswerable objections against them: *First*, What must become of the children, upon the separation of the parents? Must they be committed to the care of a step-mother; and instead of the fond attention and concern of a parent, feel all the indifference or hatred of a stranger or an enemy? These inconveniencies are sufficiently felt, where nature has made the divorce by the doom inevitable to all mortals: And shall we seek to multiply these inconveniencies, by multiplying divorces, and putting it in the power of parents, upon every caprice, to render their posterity miserable?

*Secondly*, If it be true, on the one hand, that the heart of man naturally delights in liberty, and hates every thing to which it is confined; 'tis also true, on the other hand, that the heart of man naturally submits to necessity, and soon loses an inclination, when there appears an absolute impossibility of gratifying it. These principles of human nature, you'll say, are contradictory: But what is man but a heap of contradictions! Though 'tis remarkable, that where principles are, after this manner, contrary in their operation, they do not always destroy each other; but the one or the other may predominate on any particular occasion, according as circumstances are more or less favourable to it. For instance, love is a restless and impatient passion, full of caprices and variations;  
arising



arising in a moment from a feature, from an air, from nothing, and suddenly extinguishing after the same manner. Such a passion requires liberty above all things; and therefore ELOISA had reason, when, in order to preserve this passion, she refused to marry her beloved ABELARD.

*How oft, when prest to marriage, have I said,  
Curse on all laws but those which love has made:  
Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,  
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.*

But *friendship* is a calm and sedate affection, conducted by reason and cemented by habit; springing from long acquaintance and mutual obligations; without jealousies or fears, and without those feverish fits of heat and cold, which cause such an agreeable torment in the amorous passion. So sober an affection, therefore, as friendship, rather thrives under constraint, and never rises to such a height, as when any strong interest or necessity binds two persons together, and gives them some common object of pursuit. Let us consider then, whether love or friendship should most predominate in marriage; and we shall soon determine whether liberty or constraint be most favourable to it. The happiest marriages, to be sure, are found where love, by long acquaintance, is consolidated into friendship. Whoever dreams of raptures and extasies beyond the honey-month, is a fool. Even romances themselves, with all their liberty of fiction, are obliged to drop their lovers the very day of their marriage, and find it easier to support the passion for a dozen years under coldness, disdain and difficulties, than a week under possession and security. We need not, therefore, be afraid of drawing the marriage-knot the closest possible,

possible. The friendship between the persons, where it is solid and sincere, will rather gain by it: And where it is wavering and uncertain, this is the best expedient for fixing it. How many frivolous quarrels and disgusts are there, which people of common prudence endeavour to forget, when they lie under a necessity of passing their lives together; but which would soon be enflamed into the most deadly hatred, were they pursued to the utmost, under the prospect of an easy separation?

In the *third* place, we must consider, that nothing is more dangerous than to unite two persons so closely in all their interests and concerns, as man and wife, without rendering the union intire and total. The least possibility of a separate interest must be the source of endless quarrels and jealousies. What Dr. PARNEL calls,

*The little pilf'ring temper of a wife,*

will be doubly ruinous; and the husband's selfishness, being accompanied with more power, may be still more dangerous.

Should these reasons against voluntary divorces be esteemed insufficient, I hope no body will pretend to refuse the testimony of experience. At the time when divorces were most frequent among the ROMANS, marriages were most rare; and AUGUSTUS was obliged, by penal laws, to force the men of fashion into the married state: A circumstance which is scarce to be found in any other age or nation. The more ancient laws of ROME which prohibited divorces, are extremely praised by DIONYSIUS HALYCARNASSÆUS†. Wonderful was the har-

† Lib. 2.



mony, says the historian, which this inseparable union of interests produced between married persons; while each of them considered the inevitable necessity by which they were linked together, and abandoned all prospect of any other choice or establishment.

The exclusion of polygamy and divorces sufficiently recommends our present EUROPEAN practice with regard to marriage.

ESSAY

## E S S A Y XX.

## OF SIMPLICITY AND REFINEMENT IN WRITING.

**F**INE writing, according to Mr. ADDISON, consists of sentiments, which are natural, without being obvious. There cannot be a juster, and more concise definition of fine writing.

Sentiments, which are merely natural, affect not the mind with any pleasure, and seem not worthy of our attention. The pleasantries of a waterman, the observations of a peasant, the ribaldry of a porter or hackney coachman; all these are natural, and disagreeable. What an insipid comedy should we make of the chit-chat of the tea-table, copied faithfully and at full length? Nothing can please persons of taste, but nature drawn with all her graces and ornaments, *la belle nature*; or if we copy low life, the strokes must be strong and remarkable, and must convey a lively image to the mind. The absurd naivety of *Sancho Pancho* is represented in such inimitable colours by CERVANTES, that it entertains as much as the picture of the most magnanimous hero or softest lover.

The case is the same with orators, philosophers, critics, or any author who speaks in his own person, without introducing other speakers or actors. If his language be not elegant, his



observations uncommon, his sense strong and masculine, he will in vain boast his nature and simplicity. He may be correct; but he never will be agreeable. 'Tis the unhappiness of such authors, that they are never blamed nor censured. The good fortune of a book, and that of a man, are not the same. The secret deceiving path of life, which HORACE talks of, *fallentis semita vitæ*, may be the happiest lot of the one; but is the greatest misfortune, which the other can possibly fall into.

On the other hand, productions, which are merely surprising, without being natural, can never give any lasting entertainment to the mind. To draw chimeras is not, properly speaking, to copy or imitate. The justness of the representation is lost, and the mind is displeased to find a picture, which bears no resemblance to any original. Nor are such excessive refinements more agreeable in the epistolary or philosophic style, than in the epic or tragic. Too much ornament is a fault in every kind of production. Uncommon expressions, strong flashes of wit, pointed similes, and epigrammatic turns, especially when they recur too frequently, are a disfigurement rather than any embellishment of discourse. As the eye, in surveying a GOTHIC building, is distracted by the multiplicity of ornaments, and loses the whole by its minute attention to the parts; so the mind, in perusing a work overstocked with wit, is fatigued and disgusted with the constant endeavour to shine and surprize. This is the case where a writer overabounds in wit, even though that wit, in itself, should be just and agreeable. But it commonly happens to such writers, that they seek for their favourite ornaments, even where the subject affords them not; and by that means, have twenty insipid conceits for one thought which is really beautiful.

There

There is no subject in critical learning more copious, than this of the just mixture of simplicity and refinement in writing; and therefore, not to wander in too large a field, I shall confine myself to a few general observations on that head.

*First, I observe, That though excesses of both kinds are to be avoided, and though a proper medium ought to be studied in all productions; yet this medium lies not in a point, but admits of a very considerable latitude.* Consider the wide distance, in this respect, between Mr. POPE and LUCRETIVS. These seem to lie in the two greatest extremes of refinement and simplicity, in which a poet can indulge himself, without being guilty of any blameable excess. All this interval may be filled with poets, who may differ from each other, but may be equally admirable, each in his peculiar style and manner. CORNEILLE and CONGREVE, who carry their wit and refinement somewhat farther than Mr. POPE (if poets of so different a kind can be compared together) and SOPHOCLES and TERENCE, who are more simple than LUCRETIVS, seem to have gone out of that medium, in which the most perfect productions are found, and to be guilty of some excess in these opposite characters. Of all the great poets, VIRGIL and RACINE, in my opinion, lie nearest the center, and are the farthest removed from both the extremities.

My second observation on this head is, *That it is very difficult, if not impossible, to explain by words, where the just medium between the excesses of simplicity and refinement lies, or to give any rule, by which we can know precisely the bounds between the fault and the beauty.* A critic may discourse not only very judiciously on this head, without instructing his readers, but even



without understanding the matter perfectly himself. There is not a finer piece of criticism than *the dissertation on pastorals* by FONTENELLE; where, by a number of reflections and philosophical reasonings, he endeavours to fix the just medium, which is fuitable to that species of writing. But let any one read the pastorals of that author, and he will be convinced that this judicious critic, notwithstanding his fine reasonings, had a false taste, and fixed the point of perfection much nearer the extreme of refinement than pastoral poetry will admit of. The sentiments of his shepherds are better suited to the toilettes of PARIS, than to the forests of ARCADIA. But this it is impossible to discover from his critical reasonings. He blames all excessive painting and ornament as much as VIRGIL could have done, had *he* wrote a dissertation on that species of poetry. However different the tastes of men may be, their general discourses on these subjects are commonly the same. No criticism can be very instructive, which descends not to particulars, and is not full of examples and illustrations. 'Tis allowed on all hands, that beauty, as well as virtue, lies always in a medium; but where this medium is placed, is the great question, and can never be sufficiently explained by general reasonings.

I shall deliver it as a *third* observation on this subject, *That we ought to be more on our guard against the excess of refinement than that of simplicity; and that because the former excess is both less beautiful, and more dangerous than the latter.*

'Tis a certain rule, that wit and passion are intirely inconsistent. When the affections are moved, there is no place for the imagination. The mind of man being naturally limited, 'tis impossible, that all its faculties can operate at once: And  
the

the more any one predominates, the less room is there for the others to exert their vigour. For this reason, a greater degree of simplicity is required in all compositions, where men, and actions, and passions are painted, than in such as consist of reflections and observations. And as the former species of writing is the more engaging and beautiful, one may safely, upon this account, give the preference to the extreme of simplicity above that of refinement.

We may also observe, that those compositions, which we read the ofteneft, and which every man of taste has got by heart, have the recommendation of simplicity, and have nothing surprising in the thought, when divested of that elegance of expression, and harmony of numbers, with which it is cloathed. If the merit of the composition lies in a point of wit; it may strike at first; but the mind anticipates the thought in the second perusal, and is no longer affected by it. When I read an epigram of MARTIAL, the first line recalls the whole; and I have no pleasure in repeating to myself what I know already. But each line, each word in CATULLUS, has its merit; and I am never tired with the perusal of him. 'Tis sufficient to run over COWLEY once: But PARNEL, after the fiftieth reading, is as fresh as at the first. Besides, 'tis with books, as with women, where a certain plainness of manner and of dress is more engaging than that glare of paint and airs and apparel, which may dazzle the eye, but reaches not the affections. TERENCE is a modest and bashful beauty, to whom we grant every thing, because he assumes nothing, and whose purity and nature make a durable, though not a violent impression on us.

But refinement, as it is the less *beautiful*, so is it the more *dangerous* extreme, and what we are the aptest to fall into.

Simplicity



Simplicity passes for dulness, when it is not accompanied with great elegance and propriety. On the contrary, there is something surprising in a blaze of wit and conceit. Ordinary readers are mightily struck with it, and falsely imagine it to be the most difficult, as well as most excellent way of writing. *SENECA* abounds with agreeable faults, says *QUINTILIAN*, *abundat dulcibus vitiis*; and for that reason is the more dangerous, and the more apt to pervert the taste of the young and inconsiderate.

I shall add, that the excess of refinement is now more to be guarded against than ever; because 'tis the extreme which men are the most apt to fall into, after learning has made great progress, and after eminent writers have appeared in every species of composition. The endeavour to please by novelty leads men wide of simplicity and nature, and fills their writings with affectation and conceit. It was thus the *ASIATIC* eloquence degenerated so much from the *ATTIC*. It was thus the age of *CLAUDIUS* and *NERO* became so much inferior to that of *AUGUSTUS* in taste and genius: And perhaps there are, at present, some symptoms of a like degeneracy of taste, in *FRANCE* as well as in *ENGLAND*.

## E S S A Y XXI.

### OF NATIONAL CHARACTERS.

THE vulgar are very apt to carry all *national characters* to extremes; and having once established it as a principle, that any people are knavish, or cowardly, or ignorant, they will admit of no exception, but comprehend every individual under the same character. Men of sense condemn these undistinguishing judgments: Though at the same time, they allow, that each nation has a peculiar set of manners, and that some particular qualities are more frequently to be met with among one people than among their neighbours. The common people in SWISSERLAND have surely more probity than those of the same rank in IRELAND; and every prudent man will, from that circumstance alone, make a difference in the trust which he reposes in each. We have reason to expect greater wit and gaiety in a FRENCHMAN than in a SPANIARD; though CERVANTES was born in SPAIN. An ENGLISHMAN will naturally be supposed to have more knowledge than a DANE; though TYCHO BRAHE was a native of DENMARK.

Different reasons are assigned for these *national characters*; while some account for them from *moral* and others from *physical* causes. By *moral* causes, I mean all circumstances, which are fitted to work on the mind as motives or reasons, and which  
render



render a peculiar set of manners habitual to us. Of this kind are, the nature of the government, the revolutions of public affairs, the plenty or penury in which the people live, the situation of the nation with regard to its neighbours, and above all, the course of education, and the example of parents and companions. By *physical* causes, I mean those qualities of the air and climate, which are supposed to work insensibly on the temper, by altering the tone and habit of the body, and giving a particular complexion, which though reflexion and reason may sometimes overcome, yet will it prevail among the generality of mankind, and have an influence on their manners.

That the character of a nation will very much depend on *moral* causes, must be evident to the most superficial observer; since a nation is nothing but a collection of individuals, and the manners of individuals are frequently determined by these causes. As poverty and hard labour debase the minds of the common people, and render them unfit for any science and ingenious profession; so where any government becomes very oppressive to all its subjects, it must have a proportional effect on their temper and genius, and must banish all the liberal arts from among them. Instances of this nature are very frequent in the world.

The same principle of moral causes fixes the character of different professions, and alters even that disposition, which the particular members receive from the hand of nature. A *soldier* and a *priest* are different characters, in all nations, and all ages; and this difference is founded on circumstances, whose operation is eternal and unalterable.

The uncertainty of their life makes soldiers lavish and generous, as well as brave: Their idleness, together with the large societies, which they form in camps or garrisons, inclines them to pleasure and gallantry: By their frequent change of company, they acquire good breeding and an openness of behaviour: Being employed only against a public and an open enemy, they become candid, honest, and undefining: And as they use more the labour of the body than that of the mind, they are commonly thoughtless and ignorant\*.

'Tis a trite, but not altogether a false maxim, that *priests of all religions are the same*; and though the character of the profession will not, in every instance, prevail over the personal character, yet it is sure always to predominate with the greater number. For as chymists observe, that spirits, when raised to a certain height, are all the same, from whatever materials they be extracted; so these men, being elevated above humanity, acquire a uniform character, which is intirely their own, and which, in my opinion, is, generally speaking, not the most amiable that is to be met with in human society. It is, in most points, opposite to that of a soldier; as is the way of life, from which it is derived†.

As

\* 'Tis a saying of MENANDER, Κομῆδες στρατιώτης, ἑδ' αὖ ἐὶ πλάττει θεὸς οὐθεὶς γίνοιτ' ἂν. MEN. apud STOBÆUM. *'Tis not in the power even of God to make a polite soldier.* The contrary observation with regard to the manners of soldiers takes place in our days. This seems to me a presumption, that the ancients owed all their refinement and civility to books and study; for which, indeed, a soldier's life is not so well calculated. Company and the world is their sphere. And if there be any politeness to be learned from company, they will certainly have a considerable share of it.

† Tho' all mankind have a strong propensity to religion at certain times and in certain dispositions; yet are there few or none, who have it to that degree, and with



As to *physical causes*, I am inclined to doubt altogether of their operation in this particular; nor do I think, that men owe  
any

that constancy, which is requisite to support the character of this profession. It must, therefore, happen, that clergymen, being drawn from the common mass of mankind, as people are to other employments, by the views of profit, the greatest part, though no atheists or free-thinkers, will find it necessary, on particular occasions, to feign more devotion than they are, at that time, possessed of, and to maintain the appearance of fervor and seriousness, even when jaded with the exercises of their religion, or when they have their minds engaged in the common occupations of life. They must not, like the rest of the world, give scope to their natural movements and sentiments: They must set a guard over their looks and words and actions: And in order to support the veneration paid them by the ignorant vulgar, they must not only keep a remarkable reserve, but must promote the spirit of superstition, by a continued grimace and hypocrisy. This dissimulation often destroys the candour and ingenuity of their temper, and makes an irreparable breach in their character.

If by chance any of them be possessed of a temper more susceptible of devotion than usual, so that he has but little occasion for hypocrisy to support the character of his profession; 'tis so natural for him to over-rate this advantage, and to think that it atones for every violation of morality, that frequently he is not more virtuous than the hypocrite. And though few dare openly avow those exploded opinions, *that every thing is lawful to the saints, and that they alone have property in their goods*; yet we may observe, that these principles lurk in every bosom, and represent a zeal for religious observances as so great a merit, that it may compensate for many vices and enormities. This observation is so common, that all prudent men are on their guard, when they meet with any extraordinary appearance of religion; though at the same time, they confess, that there are many exceptions to this general rule, and that probity and superstition are not altogether incompatible.

Most men are ambitious; but the ambition of other men may commonly be satisfied, by excelling in their particular profession, and thereby promoting the interests of society. The ambition of the clergy can often be satisfied only by promoting ignorance and superstition and implicit faith and pious frauds. And having got what ARCHIMEDES only wanted, (*viz.* another world, on which he could fix his engines) no wonder they move this world at their pleasure.

Most men have an over-weening conceit of themselves; but *these* have a peculiar temptation to that vice, who are regarded with such veneration, and are even deemed sacred, by the ignorant multitude.

Most

any thing of their temper or genius to the air, food, or climate. I confess, that the contrary opinion may justly, at first sight, seem

Most men are apt to bear a particular regard for members of their own profession; but as a lawyer, or physician, or merchant does, each of them, follow out his business apart, the interests of these professions are not so closely united as the interests of clergymen of the same religion; where the whole body gains by the veneration, paid to their common tenets, and by the suppression of antagonists.

Few men can bear contradiction with patience; but the clergy too often proceed even to a degree of fury on this article: Because all their credit and livelihood depend upon the belief, which their opinions meet with; and they alone pretend to a divine and supernatural authority, or have any colour for representing their antagonists as impious and prophane. The *Odium Theologicum*, or Theological Hatred, is noted even to a proverb, and means that degree of rancour, which is the most furious and implacable.

Revenge is a very natural passion to mankind; but seems to reign with the greatest force in priests and women: Because being deprived of the immediate exertion of anger, in violence and combat, they are apt to fancy themselves despised on that account; and their pride supports their vindictive disposition.

Thus many of the vices of human nature are, by fixed moral causes, inflamed in that profession; and though several individuals escape the contagion, yet all wise governments will be on their guard against the attempts of a society, who will for ever combine into one faction, and while it acts as a society, will for ever be actuated by ambition, pride, revenge, and a persecuting spirit.

The temper of religion is grave and serious; and this is the character required of priests, which confines them to strict rules of decency, and commonly prevents irregularity and intemperance amongst them. The gaiety, much less the excesses, of pleasure, is not permitted in that body; and this virtue is, perhaps, the only one, which they owe to their profession. In religions, indeed, founded on speculative principles, and where public discourses make a part of religious service, it may also be supposed that the clergy will have a considerable share in the learning of the times; though 'tis certain that their taste and eloquence will always be better than their skill in reasoning and philosophy. But whoever possesses the other noble virtues of humanity, meekness, and moderation, as very many of them, no doubt, do, is beholden for them to nature or reflection, not to the genius of his calling.



seem very probable; since we find, that these circumstances have an influence over every other animal, and that even those creatures, which are fitted to live in all climates, such as dogs, horses, &c. do not attain the same perfection in all. The courage of bull-dogs and game-cocks seems peculiar to ENGLAND. FLANDERS is remarkable for large and heavy horses: SPAIN for horses light, and of good mettle. And any breed of these creatures, transported from one country into another, will soon lose the qualities, which they derived from their native climate. It may be asked, why not the same with men \*?

There are few questions more curious than this, or which will occur oftener in our inquiries concerning human affairs; and therefore it may be proper to give it a serious examination.

The human mind is of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without ac-

\* 'Twas no bad expedient in the ROMANS, for preventing the strong effect of the priestly character, to make it a law that no one should be received into the sacerdotal office, till he was past fifty years of age, DION. Hal. lib. 1. The living a layman till that age, 'tis presumed, would be able to fix the character.

\* CÆSAR (*de Bell. GALlico*, lib. 1.) says that the GALLIC horses were very good; the GERMAN very bad. We find in lib. 7. that he was obliged to remount some GERMAN cavalry with GALLIC horses. At present, no part of EUROPE has so bad horses of all kinds as FRANCE: But GERMANY abounds with excellent war horses. This may beget a little suspicion, that even animals depend not on the climate; but on the different breeds, and on the skill and care in rearing them. The north of ENGLAND abounds in the best horses of all kinds which are in the world. In the neighbouring counties, north side the TWEED, no good horses of any kind are to be met with. STRABO, lib. 2. rejects, in a great measure, the influence of climate upon men. All is custom and education, says he. It is not from nature, that the ATHENIANS are learned, the LACEDEMONIANS ignorant, and the THEBANS too, who are still nearer neighbours to the former. Even the difference of animals, he adds, depends not on climate.

quiring

quiring a similitude of manners, and communicating to each other their vices as well as virtues. The propensity to company and society is strong in all rational creatures; and the same disposition, which gives us this propensity, makes us enter deeply into each other's sentiments, and causes like passions and inclinations to run, as it were by contagion, through the whole club or knot of companions. Where a number of men are united into one political body, the occasions of their intercourse must be so frequent, for defence, commerce, and government, that together with the same speech or language, they must acquire a resemblance in their manners, and have a common or national character, as well as a personal one, peculiar to each individual. Now though nature produces all kinds of temper and understanding in great abundance, it follows not that she always produces them in like proportions, and that in every society the ingredients of industry and indolence, valour and cowardice, humanity and brutality, wisdom and folly, will be mixed after the same manner. In the infancy of society, if any of these dispositions be found in greater abundance than the rest, it will naturally prevail in the composition, and give a tincture to the national character. \* Or should it be asserted, that no species of temper can reasonably be presumed to predominate, even in those contracted societies, and that the same proportions will always be preserved in the mixture; yet surely the persons in credit and authority, being still a more contracted body, cannot always be presumed to be of the same character; and their influence on the manners of the people, must, at all times, be very considerable. If on the first establishment of a republic, a BRUTUS should be placed in authority, and be transported with such an enthusiasm for liberty and public good, as to over-



look all the ties of nature, as well as private interest, such an illustrious example will naturally have an effect on the whole society, and kindle the same passion in every bosom. Whatever it be that forms the manners of one generation, the next must imbibe a deeper tincture of the same dye; men being more susceptible of all impressions during infancy, and retaining these impressions as long as they remain in the world. I assert, then, that all national characters, where they depend not on fixed *moral* causes, proceed from such accidents as these, and that physical causes have no discernable operation on the human mind.

If we run over the whole globe, or revolve all the annals of history, we shall discover every where signs of this sympathy or contagion of manners, none of the influence of air or climate.

1. We may observe, that where a very extensive government has been established for many centuries, it spreads a national character over the whole empire, and communicates to every part a similitude of manners. Thus the CHINESE have the greatest uniformity of character imaginable; though the air and climate, in different parts of those vast dominions, admit of very considerable variations.

2. In small governments, which are contiguous, the people have notwithstanding a different character, and are often as distinguishable in their manners as the most distant nations. ATHENS and THEBES were but a short day's journey from each other; though the ATHENIANS were as remarkable for ingenuity, politeness, and gaiety, as the THEBANS for dulness, rusticity, and a phlegmatic temper. PLUTARCH, discoursing of the effects of air on the minds of men, observes, that the inhabitants

bitants of the PIRÆUM possessed very different tempers from those of the higher town of ATHENS, which was distant about four miles from the former: But I believe no one attributes the difference of manners, in WAPPING and St. JAMES's, to a difference of air or climate.

3. The same national character commonly follows the authority of government to a precise boundary; and upon crossing a river or passing a mountain, one finds a new set of manners, with a new government. The LANGUEDOCIANS and GASCONS are the gayest people of all FRANCE; but whenever you pass the PYRENEES, you are among SPANIARDS. Is it conceivable, that the qualities of the air should change so exactly with the limits of an empire, which depend so much on the accidents of battles, negotiations, and marriages?

4. Where any set of men, scattered over distant nations, have a close society or communication together, they acquire a similitude of manners, and have but little in common with the nations among whom they live. Thus the JEWS in EUROPE, and the ARMENIANS in the east, have a peculiar character; and the former are as much noted for fraud, as the latter for probity\*. The *Jesuits* in all *Roman-catholic* countries, are also observed to have a character peculiar to themselves.

5. Where any accident, as a difference of language or religion, keeps two nations, inhabiting the same country, from

\* A small sect or society amidst a greater are commonly most regular in their morals; because they are more remarked, and the faults of individuals draw dishonour on the whole. The only exception to this rule is, when the superstition and prejudices of the large society are so strong as to throw an infamy on the smaller society, independent of their morals. For in that case, having no character either to save or gain, they become careless of their behaviour, except among themselves.



mixing with each other, they will preserve, during several centuries, a distinct and even opposite set of manners. The integrity, gravity, and bravery of the TURKS, form an exact contrast to the deceit, levity, and cowardice of the modern GREEKS.

6. The same set of manners will follow a nation, and adhere to them over the whole globe, as well as the same laws and language. The SPANISH, ENGLISH, FRENCH and DUTCH colonies are all distinguishable even between the tropics.

7. The manners of a people change very considerably from one age to another; either by great alterations in their government, by the mixtures of new people, or by that inconstancy, to which all human affairs are subject. The ingenuity and industry of the ancient GREEKS have nothing in common with the stupidity and indolence of the present inhabitants of those regions. Candour, bravery, and love of liberty, formed the character of the ancient ROMANS; as subtilty, cowardice, and a slavish disposition do that of the modern. The old SPANIARDS were restless, turbulent, and so addicted to war, that many of them killed themselves, when deprived of their arms by the Romans\*. One would find an equal difficulty, at present, (at least one would have found it fifty years ago) to rouse up the modern SPANIARDS to arms. The BATAVIANS were all soldiers of fortune, and hired themselves into the ROMAN armies. Their posterity make use of foreigners for the same purpose that the ROMANS did their ancestors. Though some few strokes of the FRENCH character be the same with that, which CÆSAR has ascribed to the GAULS; yet what comparison between the

\* TIT. LIVII, Lib. 34. Cap. 17.

civility, humanity, and knowlege of the modern inhabitants of that country, and the ignorance, barbarity, and grossness of the ancient? Not to insist upon the great difference between the present possessors of BRITAIN, and those before the ROMAN conquest; we may observe that our ancestors, a few centuries ago, were sunk into the most abject superstition, last century they were inflamed with the most furious enthusiasm, and are now settled into the most cool indifference with regard to religious matters, that is to be found in any nation of the world.

8. Where several neighbouring nations have a very close communication together, either by policy, commerce, or travelling, they acquire a similitude of manners, proportioned to the communication. Thus all the FRANKS appear to have a uniform character to the eastern nations. The differences among them are like the peculiar accents of different provinces, which are not distinguishable, except by an ear accustomed to them, and which commonly escape a foreigner.

9. We may often remark a wonderful mixture of manners and characters in the same nation, speaking the same language, and subject to the same government: And in this particular the ENGLISH are the most remarkable of any people, that perhaps ever were in the world. Nor is this to be ascribed to the mutability and uncertainty of their climate, or to any other *physical* causes; since all these causes take place in their neighbouring kingdom of SCOTLAND, without having the same effect. Where the government of a nation is altogether republican, it is apt to beget a particular set of manners. Where it is altogether monarchical, it is more apt to have the same effect; the

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imitation of superiors spreading the national manners faster among the people. If the governing part of a state consists altogether of merchants, as in HOLLAND, their uniform way of life will fix their character. If it consists chiefly of nobles and landed gentry, like GERMANY, FRANCE, and SPAIN, the same effect follows. The genius of a particular sect or religion is also apt to mould the manners of a people. But the ENGLISH government is a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The people in authority are composed of gentry and merchants. All sects of religion are to be found among them. And the great liberty and independency, which every man enjoys, allows him to display the manners peculiar to him. Hence the ENGLISH, of any people in the universe, have the least of a national character; unless this very singularity may stand for such.

If the characters of men depended on the air and climate, the degrees of heat and cold should naturally be expected to have a mighty influence; since nothing has a greater effect on all plants and irrational animals. And indeed there is some reason to think, that all the nations, which live beyond the polar circles or between the tropics, are inferior to the rest of the species, and are utterly incapable of all the higher attainments of the human mind. The poverty and misery of the northern inhabitants of the globe, and the indolence of the southern, from their few necessities, may, perhaps, account for this remarkable difference, without our having recourse to *physical* causes. This however is certain, that the characters of nations are very promiscuous in the temperate climates, and that almost all the general observations, which have been formed of the more southern

southern or more northern nations in these climates, are found to be uncertain and fallacious \*.

Shall we say, that the neighbourhood of the sun inflames the imagination of men, and gives it a peculiar spirit and vivacity. The FRENCH, GREEKS, EGYPTIANS, and PERSIANS are remarkable for gaiety. The SPANIARDS, TURKS, and CHINESE are noted for gravity and a serious behaviour, without any such difference of climate, as to produce this difference of temper.

The GREEKS and ROMANS, who called all other nations barbarians, confined genius and a fine understanding to the more southern climates, and pronounced the northern nations incapable of all knowledge and civility. But BRITAIN has produced as great men, either for action or learning, as GREECE or ITALY has to boast of.

'Tis pretended, that the sentiments of men become more delicate as the country approaches nearer the sun; and that the

\* I am apt to suspect the negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over EUROPE, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people, without any education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA indeed they talk of one negro as a man of parts and learning; but 'tis likely he is admired for very slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.



taste of beauty and elegance receives proportionable improvements in every latitude; as we may particularly observe of the languages, of which the more southern are smooth and melodious, and the northern harsh and untuneable. But this observation holds not universally. The ARABIC is uncouth and disagreeable: The MUSCOVITE soft and musical. Energy, strength, and harshness form the character of the LATIN tongue: The ITALIAN is the most liquid, smooth, and effeminate language that can possibly be imagined. Every language will depend somewhat on the manners of the people; but much more on that original stock of words and sounds, which they received from their ancestors, and which remain unchangeable, even while their manners admit of the greatest alterations. Who can doubt, but the ENGLISH are at present a much more polite and knowing people than the GREEKS were for several ages after the siege of TROY? Yet there is no comparison between the language of MILTON and that of HOMER. Nay, the greater are the alterations and improvements, which happen in the manners of a people, the less can be expected in their language. A few eminent and refined geniuses will communicate their taste and knowledge to a whole people, and produce the greatest improvements: But they fix the tongue by their writings, and prevent, in some degree, its farther changes.

Lord BACON has observed, that the inhabitants of the south are, in general, more ingenious than those of the north; but that, where the native of a cold climate has genius, he rises to a higher pitch than can be reached by the southern wits. This

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observation a late writer \* confirms, by comparing the southern wits to cucumbers, which are commonly all good of their kind; but at best are an insipid fruit: While the northern geniuses are like melons, of which not one in fifty is good; but when it is so, it has an exquisite relish. I believe this remark may be allowed just, when confined to the EUROPEAN nations, and to the present age, or rather to the preceding one: But then I think it may be accounted for from moral causes. All the sciences and liberal arts have been imported to us from the south; and 'tis easy to imagine, that, in the first ardor of application, when excited by emulation and by glory, the few, who were addicted to them, would carry them to the greatest height, and stretch every nerve, and every faculty, to reach the pinnacle of perfection. Such illustrious examples spread knowledge every where, and begot an universal esteem for the sciences: After which, 'tis no wonder, that industry relaxes; while men meet not with suitable encouragement, nor arrive at such distinction by their attainments. The universal diffusion of learning among a people, and the intire banishment of gross ignorance and rusticity, is, therefore, seldom attended with any remarkable perfection in particular persons. It seems to be taken for granted in the dialogue *de Oratoribus*, that knowledge was much more common in VESPASIAN's age than that of CICERO or AUGUSTUS. QUINCTILIAN also complains of the profanation of learning, by its becoming too vulgar. "Formerly," says JUVENAL, "science was confined to GREECE and ITALY. Now the whole world emulate ATHENS and ROME. Eloquent GAUL has taught BRITAIN, knowing in the laws. Even THULE entertains thoughts of hiring rhe-

\* Dr. Berkeley: Minute Philosopher.

"toricians.



“toricians for its instruction\*.” This state of learning is remarkable; because JUVENAL is himself the last of the ROMAN writers, who possessed any degree of genius. Those, who succeeded, are valued for nothing but the matters of fact, of which they give us information. I hope the late conversion of MUSCOVY to the study of the sciences will not prove a like prognostic to the present period of learning.

Cardinal BENTIVOGLIO gives the preference to the northern nations above the southern with regard to candour and sincerity; and mentions, on the one hand, the SPANIARDS and ITALIANS, and on the other, the FLEMINGS and GERMANS. But I am apt to think, that this has happened by accident. The ancient ROMANS seem to have been a candid sincere people, as are the modern TURKS. But if we must needs suppose, that this event has arisen from fixed causes, we may only conclude from it, that all extremes are apt to concur, and are commonly attended with the same consequences. Treachery is the usual concomitant of ignorance and barbarism; and if civilized nations ever embrace subtle and crooked politics, 'tis from an excess of refinement, which makes them disdain the plain direct road to power and glory.

Most conquests have gone from north to south; and hence it has been inferred, that the northern nations possess a superior degree of courage and ferocity. But it would have been juster

\* “Sed Cantaber unde  
Stoicus? antiqui præsertim ætate Metelli.  
Nunc totus GRAIAS, nostrasque habet orbis ATHENAS.  
GALLIA caudidos docuit facunda BRITANNOS:  
De conducendo loquitur jam rhetore THULE.”

Satyr. 15.

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to have said, that most conquests are made by poverty and want upon plenty and riches. The SARACENS, leaving the deserts of ARABIA, carried their conquests northwards upon all the fertile provinces of the ROMAN empire; and met the TURKS half way, who were coming southwards from the deserts of TARTARY.

An eminent writer \* has remarked, that all courageous animals are also carnivorous, and that greater courage is to be expected in a people, such as the ENGLISH, whose food is strong and hearty, than in the half-starved commonalty of other countries. But the SWEDES, notwithstanding their disadvantages in this particular, are not inferior, in martial courage, to any nation that ever was in the world.

In general, we may observe, that courage, of all national qualities, is the most precarious; because it is exerted only at intervals, and by a few in every nation; whereas industry, knowledge, civility, may be of constant and universal use, and for several ages, may become habitual to the whole people. If courage be preserved, it must be by discipline, example and opinion. The tenth legion of CÆSAR, and the regiment of PICARDY in FRANCE were formed promiscuously from among the citizens; but having once entertained a notion, that they were the best troops in the service, this very opinion really made them such.

As a proof how much courage depends on opinion, we may observe, that of the two chief tribes of the GREEKS, the DORIANS, and IONIANS, the former were always esteemed, and

\* Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's account of the Netherlands.



always appeared more brave and manly than the latter; though the colonies of both the tribes were interspersed and intermingled through all the extent of GREECE, the lesser ASIA, SICILY, ITALY, and the islands of the ÆGEAN sea. The ATHENIANS were the only IONIANS that ever had any reputation for valour or military achievements; though even these were esteemed inferior to the LACEDEMONIANS, the bravest of the DORIANS.

The only observation, with regard to the differences of men in different climates, on which we can rest any weight, is the vulgar one, that people in the northern regions have a greater inclination to strong liquors, and those in the southern to love and women. One can assign a very probable *physical* cause for this difference. Wine and distilled spirits warm the frozen blood in the colder climates, and fortify men against the injuries of the weather: As the genial heat of the sun, in the countries exposed to his beams, inflames the blood, and exalts the passion between the sexes.

Perhaps too, the matter may be accounted for by *moral* causes. All strong liquors are rarer in the north, and consequently are more coveted. DIODORUS SICULUS \* tells us, that the GAULS in his time were great drunkards, and much addicted to wine; chiefly, I suppose, from its rarity and novelty. On the other hand, the heat in the southern climates, obliging men and women to go half-naked, thereby renders

\* *Lib.* 5. The same author ascribes taciturnity to that people; a new proof that national characters may alter very much. Taciturnity, as a national character, implies unfociableness. ARISTOTLE in his Politics, book 2. chap. 9. says that the GAULS are the only warlike nation who are negligent of women.

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their frequent commerce more dangerous, and inflames their mutual passion. This makes parents and husbands more jealous and reserved; which still farther inflames the passion. Not to mention, that as women ripen sooner in the southern regions, 'tis necessary to observe greater jealousy and care in their education; it being evident, that a girl of twelve cannot possess equal discretion to govern this passion, with one, who feels not its violence till she be seventeen or eighteen.

Perhaps too, the fact is false, that nature has, either from moral or physical causes, distributed these different inclinations to the different climates. The ancient GREEKS, though born in a warm climate, seem to have been much addicted to the bottle; nor were their parties of pleasure any thing but matches of drinking among the men, who passed their time altogether apart from the fair sex. Yet when ALEXANDER led the GREEKS into PERSIA, a still more southern climate, they multiplied their debauches of this kind, in imitation of the PERSIAN manners\*. So honourable was the character of a drunkard among the PERSIANS, that CYRUS the younger, soliciting the sober LACEDEMONIANS for succour against his brother ARTAXERXES, claims it chiefly on account of his superior endowments, as more valorous, more bountiful, and a better drinker†. DARIUS HYSTASPES made it be inscribed on his tomb-stone, among his other virtues and princely qualities, that no one could bear a greater quantity of liquor. You may obtain any thing of the NEGROES by offering them strong drink;

\* BABYLONII maxime in vinum, & quæ ebrietatem sequuntur, effusi sunt. QUINT; CUR. Lib. 5. Cap. 1.

† PLUT. SYMP. Lib. 1. Quæst. 4.



and may easily prevail with them to sell, not only their parents, but their wives and mistresses, for a cask of brandy. In FRANCE and ITALY few drink pure wine, except in the greatest heats of summer; and indeed, it is then almost as necessary, in order to recruit the spirits, evaporated by heat, as it is in SWEDEN, during the winter, in order to warm the bodies congealed by the rigour of the season.

If jealousy be regarded as a proof of an amorous disposition, no people were more jealous than the MUSCOVITES, before their communication with EUROPE had somewhat altered their manners in this particular.

But supposing the fact true, that nature, by physical principles, has regularly distributed these two passions, the one to the northern, the other to the southern regions; we can only infer, that the climate may affect the grosser and more bodily organs of our frame; not that it can work upon those finer organs, on which the operations of the mind and understanding depend. And this is agreeable to the analogy of nature. The races of animals never degenerate when carefully tended; and horses, in particular, always show their blood in their shape, spirit and swiftness: But a coxcomb may beget a philosopher; as a man of virtue may leave a worthless progeny.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that though the passion for liquor be much more brutal and debasing than love, which, when properly managed, is the source of all politeness and refinement; yet this gives not so great an advantage to the southern climates, as we may be apt, at first sight, to imagine.

gine. When love goes beyond a certain pitch, it renders men jealous, and cuts off the free intercourse between the sexes, on which the politeness of a nation will commonly much depend. And if we would subtilize and refine upon this point we might observe, that nations, in very temperate climates, stand the fairest chance for all sorts of improvement; their blood not being so much inflamed as to render them jealous, and yet being warm enough to make them set a due value on the charms and endowments of the fair sex.





# ESSAY XXII.

## OF TRAGEDY.

**I**T seems an unaccountable pleasure, which the spectators of a well wrote tragedy receive from sorrow, terror, anxiety, and other passions, which are in themselves disagreeable and uneasy. The more they are touched and affected, the more are they delighted with the spectacle; and as soon as the uneasy passions cease to operate, the piece is at an end. One scene of full joy and contentment and security is the utmost, that any composition of this kind can bear; and it is sure always to be the concluding one. If in the texture of the piece, there be interwoven any scenes of satisfaction, they afford only faint gleams of pleasure, which are thrown in by way of variety, and in order to plunge the actors into deeper distress, by means of that contrast and disappointment. The whole art of the poet is employed, in rousing and supporting the compassion and indignation, the anxiety and resentment of his audience. They are pleased in proportion as they are afflicted, and never are so happy as when they employ tears, sobs, and cries to give vent to their sorrow, and relieve their heart, swollen with the tenderest sympathy and compassion.

The few critics, who have had some tincture of philosophy, have remarked this singular phenomenon, and have endeavoured to account for it.

L'abbe

L'abbe DUBOS, in his reflections on poetry and painting, asserts, that nothing is in general so disagreeable to the mind as the languid, listless state of indolence, into which it falls upon the removal of every passion and occupation. To get rid of this painful situation, it seeks every amusement and pursuit; business, gaming, shews, executions; whatever will rouse the passions, and take its attention from itself. No matter what the passion is: Let it be disagreeable, afflicting, melancholy, disordered; it is still better than that insipid languor, which arises from perfect tranquillity and repose.

It is impossible not to admit this account, as being, at least, in part satisfactory. You may observe, when there are several tables of gaming, that all the company run to those, where the deepest play is, even though they find not there the best players. The view, or at least, imagination of high passions, arising from great loss or gain, affects the spectators by sympathy, gives them some touches of the same passions, and serves them for a momentary entertainment. It makes the time pass the easier with them, and is some relief to that oppression, under which men commonly labour, when left intirely to their own thoughts and meditations.

We find, that common lyars always magnify, in their narrations, all kinds of danger, pain, distress, sickness, deaths, murders, and cruelties; as well as joy, beauty, mirth, and magnificence. It is an absurd secret, which they have for pleasing their company, fixing their attention, and attaching them to such marvellous relations, by the passions and emotions, which they excite.



There is, however, a difficulty of applying to the present subject, in its full extent, this solution, however ingenious and satisfactory it may appear. It is certain, that the same object of distress, which pleases in a tragedy, were it really set before us, would give the most unfeigned uneasiness; though it be then the most effectual cure of languor and indolence. Monsieur FONTENELLE seems to have been sensible of this difficulty; and accordingly attempts another solution of the phenomenon; at least makes some addition to the theory above mentioned.\*

“Pleasure and pain,” says he, “which are two sentiments so different in themselves, differ not so much in their cause. From the instance of tickling, it appears, that the movement of pleasure pushed a little too far, becomes pain; and that the movement of pain, a little moderated, becomes pleasure. Hence it proceeds, that there is such a thing as a sorrow, soft and agreeable: It is a pain weakened and diminished. The heart likes naturally to be moved and affected. Melancholy objects suit it, and even disastrous and sorrowful, provided they are softened by some circumstance. It is certain, that on the theatre, the representation has almost the effect of reality; but yet it has not altogether that effect. However we may be hurried away by the spectacle; whatever dominion the senses and imagination may usurp over the reason, there still lurks at the bottom a certain idea of falsehood in the whole of what we see. This idea, though weak and disguised, suffices to diminish the pain which we suffer from the misfortunes of those whom we love, and to reduce that affliction to such a pitch as converts it into a pleasure. We weep for

\* *Reflections sur la poetique*, §. 36.

“ the misfortune of a hero, to whom we are attached. In the  
“ same instant we comfort ourselves, by reflecting, that it is  
“ nothing but a fiction: And it is precisely that mixture of  
“ sentiments, which composes an agreeable sorrow, and tears  
“ that delight us. But as that affliction, which is caused by  
“ exterior and sensible objects, is stronger than the consolation  
“ which arises from an internal reflection, they are the effects  
“ and symptoms of sorrow, which ought to prevail in the com-  
“ position.”

This solution seems just and convincing; but perhaps it wants still some addition, to make it answer fully the phenomenon, which we here examine. All the passions, excited by eloquence, are agreeable in the highest degree, as well as those which are moved by painting and the theatre. The epilogues of CICERO are, on this account chiefly, the delight of every reader of taste; and it is difficult to read some of them without the deepest sympathy and sorrow. His merit as an orator, no doubt, depends much on his success in this particular. When he had raised tears in his judges and all his audience, they were then the most highly delighted, and expressed the greatest satisfaction with the pleader. The pathetic description of the butchery made by VERRES of the SICILIAN captains is a masterpiece of this kind: But I believe none will affirm, that the being present at a melancholy scene of that nature would afford any entertainment. Neither is the sorrow here softened by fiction: For the audience were convinced of the reality of every circumstance. What is it then, which in this case raises a pleasure from the bosom of uneasiness, so to speak; and a pleasure, which still retains all the features and outward symptoms of distress and sorrow?

I answer:



I answer: This extraordinary effect proceeds from that very eloquence, with which the melancholy scene is represented. The genius required to paint objects in a lively manner, the art employed in collecting all the pathetic circumstances, the judgment displayed in disposing them; the exercise, I say, of these noble talents, together with the force of expression, and beauty of oratorical numbers, diffuse the highest satisfaction on the audience, and excite the most delightful movements. By this means, the uneasiness of the melancholy passions is not only overpowered and effaced by something stronger of an opposite kind; but the whole movement of those passions is converted into pleasure, and swells the delight which the eloquence raises in us. The same force of oratory, employed on an uninteresting subject, would not please half so much, or rather would appear altogether ridiculous; and the mind, being left in absolute calmness and indifference, would relish none of those beauties of imagination or expression, which, if joined to passion, give it such exquisite entertainment. The impulse or vehemence arising from sorrow, compassion, indignation, receives a new direction from the sentiments of beauty. The latter, being the predominant emotions, seize the whole mind, and convert the former into themselves, or at least, tincture them so strongly as totally to alter their nature: And the soul, being, at the same time, roused by passion, and charmed by eloquence, feels, on the whole a strong movement, which is altogether delightful.

The same principle takes place in tragedy; with this addition, that tragedy is an imitation, and imitation is always of itself agreeable. This circumstance serves still farther to smooth the motions of passion, and convert the whole feeling into one uniform and strong enjoyment. Objects of the greatest terror  
and.

and distress please in painting, and please more than the most beautiful objects, that appear calm and indifferent†. The affection rousing the mind, excites a large stock of spirit and vehemence; which is all transformed into pleasure by the force of the prevailing movement. It is thus the fiction of tragedy softens the passion, by an infusion of a new feeling, not merely by weakening or diminishing the sorrow. You may by degrees weaken a real sorrow, till it totally disappears; yet in none of its gradations will it ever give pleasure; except, perhaps, by accident, to a man sunk under lethargic indolence, whom it rouses from that languid state.

To confirm this theory, it will be sufficient to produce other instances, where the subordinate movement is converted into the predominant, and gives force to it, though of a different, and even sometimes though of a contrary nature.

Novelty naturally rouses the mind, and attracts our attention; and the movements, which it causes, are always converted into any passion, belonging to the object, and join their force to it. Whether an event excites joy or sorrow, pride or shame, anger or good will, it is sure to produce a stronger affection, when new or unusual. And though novelty of itself be agreeable, it enforces the painful, as well as agreeable passions.

† Painters make no scruple of representing distress and sorrow as well as any other passion: But they seem not to dwell so much on these melancholy affections as the poets, who, though they copy every emotion of the human breast, yet pass very quickly over the agreeable sentiments. A painter represents only one instant; and if that be passionate enough, it is sure to affect and delight the spectator: But nothing can furnish to the poet a variety of scenes and incidents and sentiments, except distress, terror, or anxiety. Compleat joy and satisfaction is attended with security, and leaves no farther room for action.



Had you any intention to move a person extremely by the narration of any event, the best method of increasing its effect would be artfully to delay informing him of it, and first excite his curiosity and impatience before you let him into the secret. This is the artifice practised by IAGO in the famous scene of SHAKESPEARE; and every spectator is sensible, that OTHELLO's jealousy acquires additional force from his preceding impatience, and that the subordinate passion is here readily transformed into the predominant.

Difficulties increase passions of every kind; and by rousing our attention, and exciting our active powers, they produce an emotion, which nourishes the prevailing affection.

Parents commonly love that child most, whose sickly infirm frame of body has occasioned them the greatest pains, trouble, and anxiety, in rearing him. The agreeable sentiment of affection here acquires force from sentiments of uneasiness.

Nothing endears so much a friend as sorrow for his death. The pleasure of his company has not so powerful an influence.

Jealousy is a painful passion; yet, without some share of it, the agreeable affection of love has difficulty to subsist in its full force and violence. Absence is also a great source of complaint amongst lovers, and gives them the greatest uneasiness: Yet nothing is more favourable to their mutual passion than short intervals of that kind. And if long intervals be pernicious, it is only because, through time, men are accustomed to them, and they cease to give uneasiness. Jealousy and absence in love compose the *dolce piccante* of the ITALIANS, which they suppose so essential to all pleasure.

There is a fine observation of the elder PLINY, which illustrates the principle here insisted on. *It is very remarkable, says he, that the last works of celebrated artists, which they left imperfect, are always the most prized, such as the IRIS of ARISTIDES, the TYNDARIDES of NICOMACHUS, the MEDEA of TIMOMACHUS, and the VENUS of APELLES. These are valued even above their finished productions: The broken lineaments of the piece, and the half formed idea of the painter are carefully studied; and our very grief for that curious hand, which had been stopped by death, is an additional increase to our pleasure †.*

These instances (and many more might be collected) are sufficient to afford us some insight into the analogy of nature, and to show us, that the pleasure, which poets, orators, and musicians give us, by exciting grief, sorrow, indignation, compassion, is not so extraordinary nor paradoxical, as it may at first sight appear. The force of imagination, the energy of expression, the power of numbers, the charms of imitation; all these are naturally, of themselves, delightful to the mind: And when the object presented lays also hold of some affection, the pleasure still rises upon us, by the conversion of this subordinate movement into that which is predominant. The passion, though, perhaps, naturally, and when excited by the simple appearance of a real object, it may be painful; yet is so smoothed, and softened, and mollified, when raised by the finer arts, that it affords the highest entertainment.

† Illud vero perquam rarum ac memoria dignum, etiam suprema opera artificum, imperfectasque tabulas, sicut, IRIN ARISTIDIS, TYNDARIDAS NICOMACHI, MEDEAM TIMOMACHI, & quam diximus VENEREM APELLIS, in majori admiratione esse quam perfecta. Quippe in iis lineamenta reliqua, ipsaeque cogitationes artificum spectantur, atque in lenocinio commendationis dolor est manus, cum id ageret; extinctae. Lib. xxxv. cap. 11.



To confirm this reasoning, we may observe, that if the movements of the imagination be not predominant above those of the passion, a contrary effect follows; and the former, being now subordinate, is converted into the latter, and still farther increases the pain and affliction of the sufferer.

Who could ever think of it as a good expedient for comforting an afflicted parent, to exaggerate, with all the force of oratory, the irreparable loss, which he has met with by the death of a favourite child? The more power of imagination and expression you here employ, the more you increase his despair and affliction.

The shame, confusion, and terror of VERRES, no doubt, rose in proportion to the noble eloquence and vehemence of CICERO: So also did his pain and uneasiness. These former passions were too strong for the pleasure arising from the beauties of elocution; and operated, though from the same principle, yet in a contrary manner, to the sympathy, compassion, and indignation of the audience.

Lord CLARENDON, when he approaches the catastrophe of the royal party, supposes, that his narration must then become infinitely disagreeable; and he hurries over the king's death, without giving us one circumstance of it. He considers it as too horrid a scene to be contemplated with any satisfaction, or even without the utmost pain and aversion. He himself, as well as the readers of that age, were too deeply concerned in the events, and felt a pain from subjects, which an historian and a reader of another age would regard as the most pathetic and most interesting, and, by consequence, the most agreeable.

An action, represented in tragedy, may be too bloody and atrocious. It may excite such movements of horror as will not soften into pleasure; and the greatest energy of expression, bestowed on descriptions of that nature, serves only to augment our uneasiness. Such is that action, represented in the *Ambitious Step-mother*, where a venerable old man, raised to the height of fury and despair, rushes against a pillar, and striking his head upon it, besmears it all over with mingled brains and gore. The ENGLISH theatre abounds too much with such images.

Even the common sentiments of compassion require to be softened by some agreeable affection, in order to give a thorough satisfaction to the audience. The mere suffering of plaintive virtue, under the triumphant tyranny and oppression of vice, forms a disagreeable spectacle, and is carefully avoided by all masters of the drama. In order to dismiss the audience with intire satisfaction and contentment, the virtue must either convert itself into a noble courageous despair, or the vice receive its proper punishment.

Most painters appear in this light to have been very unhappy in their subjects. As they wrought much for churches and convents, they have chiefly represented such horrible subjects as crucifixions and martyrdoms, where nothing appears but tortures, wounds, executions, and passive suffering, without any action or affection. When they turned their pencil from this ghastly mythology, they had recourse commonly to OVID, whose fictions, though passionate and agreeable, are scarce natural or probable enough for painting.

The same inversion of that principle, which is here insisted on, displays itself in common life, as in the effects of oratory and



and poetry. Raise so the subordinate passion that it becomes the predominant, it swallows up that affection, which it before nourished and increased. Too much jealousy extinguishes love: Too much difficulty renders us indifferent: Too much sickness and infirmity disgusts a selfish and unkind parent.

What so disagreeable as the dismal, gloomy, disastrous stories, with which melancholy people entertain their companions? The uneasy passion, being there raised alone, unaccompanied with any spirit, genius, or eloquence, conveys a pure uneasiness, and is attended with nothing that can soften it into pleasure or satisfaction.

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## E S S A Y    XXIII.

### OF THE STANDARD OF TASTE.

THE great variety of Tastes, as well as of opinions, which prevail in the world, is too obvious not to have fallen under every one's observation. Men of the most confined knowlege are able to remark a difference of taste in the narrow circle of their acquaintance, even where the persons have been educated under the same government, and have early imbibed the same prejudices. But those who can enlarge their view to contemplate distant nations and remote ages, are still more surprized at the great inconsistency and contrariety. We are apt to call *barbarous* whatever departs widely from our own taste and apprehension : But soon find the epithet of reproach retorted on us. And the highest arrogance and self-conceit is at last startled, on observing an equal assurance on all sides, and scruples, amidst such a contest of sentiments, to pronounce positively in its own favour.

As this variety of taste is obvious to the most careless enquirer ; so will it be found, on examination, to be still greater in reality than in appearance. The sentiments of men often differ with regard to beauty and deformity of all kinds, even while their general discourse is the same. There are certain terms in every language,



language, which import blame, and others praise; and all men, who use the same tongue, must agree in their application of them. Every voice is united in applauding elegance, propriety, simplicity, spirit in writing; and in blaming fustian, affectation, coldness, and a false brilliancy: But when critics come to particulars, this seeming unanimity vanishes; and it is found, that they had affixed a very different meaning to their expressions. In all matters of opinion and science, the case is opposite: The difference among men is there oftner found to lie in generals than in particulars; and to be less in reality than in appearance. An explication of the terms commonly ends the controversy; and the disputants are surprized to find, that they had been quarrelling, while at bottom they agreed in their judgment.

Those who found morality on sentiment, more than on reason, are inclined to comprehend ethics under the former observation, and to suppose, that in all questions, which regard conduct and manners, the difference among men is really greater than at first sight it appears. It is indeed obvious, that writers of all nations and all ages concur in applauding justice, humanity, magnanimity, prudence, veracity; and in blaming the opposite qualities. Even poets and other authors, whose compositions are chiefly calculated to please the imagination, are yet found, from HOMER down to FENELON, to inculcate the same moral precepts, and to bestow their applause and blame on the same virtues and vices. This great unanimity is usually ascribed to the influence of plain reason; which, in all these cases, maintains similar sentiments in all men, and prevents those controversies, to which the abstract sciences are so much exposed.

exposed. So far as the unanimity is real, the account may be admitted as satisfactory: But it must also be allowed that some part of the seeming harmony in morals may be accounted for from the very nature of language. The word, *virtue*, with its equivalent in every tongue, implies praise; as that of *vice* does blame: And no one, without the most obvious and grossest impropriety, could affix reproach to a term, which in general use is understood in a good sense; or bestow applause, where the idiom requires disapprobation. HOMER's general precepts, where he delivers any such, will never be controverted; but it is very obvious, that when he draws particular pictures of manners, and represents heroism in ACHILLES and prudence in ULYSSES, he intermixes a much greater degree of ferocity in the former, and of cunning and fraud in the latter, than FENELON would admit of. The sage ULYSSES in the GREEK poet seems to delight in lies and fictions, and often employs them without any necessity or even advantage: But his more scrupulous son in the FRENCH epic writer exposes himself to the most imminent perils, rather than depart from the exactest line of truth and veracity.

The admirers and followers of the ALCORAN insist very much on the excellent moral precepts, which are interspersed throughout that wild performance. But it is to be supposed, that the ARABIC words, which correspond to the ENGLISH, equity, justice, temperance, meekness, charity, were such as, from the constant use of that tongue, must always be taken in a good sense; and it would have argued the greatest ignorance, not of morals, but of language; to have mentioned them with any epithets, besides those of applause and approbation. But would we know, whether the pretended prophet had really attained a

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just sentiment of morals? Let us attend to his narration; and we shall soon find, that he bestows praise on such instances of treachery, inhumanity, cruelty, revenge, bigotry, as are utterly incompatible with civilized society. No steady rule of right seems there to be attended to; and every action is blamed or praised, so far only as it is beneficial or hurtful to the true believers.

The merit of delivering true general precepts in ethics is indeed very small. Whoever recommends any moral virtues, really does no more than is implied in the terms themselves. The people, who invented the word *charity*, and used it in a good sense, inculcated more clearly and much more efficaciously, the precept, *be charitable*, than any pretended legislator or prophet, who should insert such a *maxim* in his writings. Of all expressions, those, which, together with their other meaning, imply a degree either of blame or approbation, are the least liable to be perverted or mistaken.

It is natural for us to seek a *Standard of Taste*; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; or at least, a decision afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another.

There is a species of philosophy, which cuts off all hopes of success in such an attempt, and represents the impossibility of ever attaining any standard of taste. The difference, it is said, is very wide between judgment and sentiment. All sentiment is right; because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself, and is always real, wherever a man is conscious of it. But all determinations of the understanding are not right; because they have a reference to something beyond themselves, to

wit, real matter of fact; and are not always conformable to that standard. Among a thousand different opinions which different men may entertain of the same subject, there is one, and but one, that is just and true; and the only difficulty is to fix and ascertain it. On the contrary, a thousand different sentiments, excited by the same object, are all right: Because no sentiment represents what is really in the object. It only marks a certain conformity or relation between the object and the organs or faculties of the mind; and if that conformity did not really exist, the sentiment could never possibly have a being. Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty. One person may even perceive deformity, where another is sensible of beauty; and every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others. To seek the real beauty, or real deformity is as fruitless an enquiry, as to pretend to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter. According to the disposition of the organs, the same object may be both sweet and bitter; and the proverb has justly determined it to be fruitless to dispute concerning tastes. It is very natural, and even quite necessary, to extend this axiom to mental, as well as bodily taste; and thus common sense, which is so often at variance with philosophy, especially with the sceptical kind, is found, in one instance at least, to agree in pronouncing the same decision.

But though this axiom, by passing into a proverb, seems to have attained the sanction of common sense; there is certainly a species of common sense which opposes it, or at least serves to modify and restrain it. Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance between OGILBY and MILTON, or BUN-



YAN and ADDISON, would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he had maintained a molehill to be as high as TENERIFFE, or a pond as extensive as the ocean. Though there may be found persons, who give the preference to the former authors; no one pays attention to such a taste; and we pronounce without scruple the sentiment of these pretended critics to be absurd and ridiculous. The principle of the natural equality of tastes is then totally forgot: and while we admit of it on some occasions, where the objects seem near an equality, it appears an extravagant paradox, or rather a palpable absurdity, where objects so disproportioned are compared together.

It is evident, that none of the rules of composition are fixed by reasonings *a priori*, or can be deemed abstract conclusions of the understanding, from comparing those habitudes and relations of ideas, which are eternal and immutable. Their foundation is the same with that of all the practical sciences, experience; nor are they any thing but general observations, concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages. Many of the beauties of poetry and even of eloquence are founded on falsehood and fiction, on hyperboles, metaphors, and an abuse or perversion of expressions from their natural meaning. To check the fallies of the imagination, and to reduce every expression to geometrical truth and exactness, would be the most contrary to the laws of criticism; because it would produce a work, which, by universal experience, has been found the most insipid and disagreeable. But though poetry can never submit to exact truth, it must be confined by rules of art, discovered to the author either by genius or observation. If some negligent or irregular writers have pleased, they have  
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not pleased by their transgressions of rule or order, but in spite of these transgressions: They have possessed other beauties, which were conformable to just criticism; and the force of these beauties has been able to overpower censure, and give the mind a satisfaction superior to the disgust arising from the blemishes. ARIOSTO pleases; but not by his monstrous and improbable fictions, by his bizarre mixture of the serious and comic styles, by the want of coherence in his stories, or by the continual interruptions of his narration. He charms by the force and clearness of his expression, by the readiness and variety of his inventions, and by his natural pictures of the passions, especially those of the gay and amorous kind: And however his faults may diminish our satisfaction, they are not able entirely to destroy it. Did our pleasure really arise from those parts of his poem, which we denominate faults, this would be no objection to criticism in general: It would only be an objection to those particular rules of criticism, which would establish such circumstances to be faults, and would represent them as universally blameable. If they are found to please, they cannot be faults; let the pleasure, which they produce, be ever so unexpected and unaccountable.

But though all the general rules of art are founded only on experience and on the observation of the common sentiments of human nature, we must not imagine, that, on every occasion, the feelings of men will be conformable to these rules. Those finer emotions of the mind are of a very tender and delicate nature, and require the concurrence of many favourable circumstances to make them play with facility and exactness, according to their general and established principles. The least exterior hindrance to such small springs, or the least internal disorder,



order, disturbs their motion, and confounds the operation of the whole machine. When we would make an experiment of this nature, and would try the force of any beauty or deformity, we must choose with care a proper time and place, and bring the fancy to a suitable situation and disposition. A perfect serenity of mind, a recollection of thought, a due attention to the object; if any of these circumstances be wanting, our experiment will be fallacious, and we shall be unable to judge of the catholic and universal beauty. The relation, which nature has placed between the form and the sentiment, will at least be more obscure; and it will require greater accuracy to trace and discern it. We shall be able to ascertain its influence not so much from the operation of each particular beauty, as from the durable admiration, which attends those works, that have survived all the caprices of mode and fashion, all the mistakes of ignorance and envy.

The same HOMER, who pleased at ATHENS and ROME two thousand years ago, is still admired at PARIS and at LONDON. All the changes of climate, government, religion, and language, have not been able to obscure his glory. Authority or prejudice may give a temporary vogue to a bad poet or orator; but his reputation will never be durable or general. When his compositions are examined by posterity or by foreigners, the enchantment is dissipated, and his faults appear in their true colours. On the contrary, a real genius, the longer his works endure, and the more wide they are spread, the more sincere is the admiration which he meets with. Envy and jealousy have too much place in a narrow circle; and even familiar acquaintance with his person may diminish the applause due to his performances: But when these obstructions are removed,

moved, the beauties, which are naturally fitted to excite agreeable sentiments, immediately display their energy; and while the world endures, they maintain their authority over the minds of men.

It appears then, that amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities, from the original structure of the internal fabric, are calculated to please, and others to displease; and if they fail of their effect in any particular instance, it is from some apparent defect or imperfection in the organ. A man in a fever would not insist on his palate as able to decide concerning flavours; nor would one, affected with the jaundice, pretend to give a verdict with regard to colours. In each creature, there is a sound and a defective state; and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment. If in the sound state of the organs, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect beauty; in like manner as the appearance of objects in day-light to the eye of a man in health is denominated their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses.

Many and frequent are the defects in the internal organs, which prevent or weaken the influence of those general principles, on which depends our sentiment of beauty or deformity. Though some objects, by the structure of the mind, be naturally calculated to give pleasure, it is not to be expected, that in every individual the pleasure will be equally felt. Particular incidents



incidents and situations occur, which either throw a false light on the objects, or hinder the true from conveying to the imagination the proper sentiment and perception.

One obvious cause, why many feel not the proper sentiment of beauty, is the want of that *delicacy* of imagination, which is requisite to convey a sensibility of those finer emotions. This delicacy every one pretends to: Every one talks of it; and would reduce every kind of taste or sentiment to its standard. But as our intention in this dissertation is to mingle some light of the understanding with the feelings of sentiment, it will be proper to give a more accurate definition of delicacy, than has hitherto been attempted. And not to draw our philosophy from too profound a source, we shall have recourse to a noted story in *DON QUIXOTE*.

'Tis with good reason, says *SANCHO* to the squire with the great nose, that I pretend to have a judgment in wine: This is a quality hereditary in our family. Two of my kinsmen were once called to give their opinion of a hog'shead, which was supposed to be excellent, being old and of a good vintage. One of them tastes it; considers it, and after mature reflection pronounces the wine to be good, were it not for a small taste of leather, which he perceived in it. The other, after using the same precautions, gives also his verdict in favour of the wine; but with the reserve of a taste of iron, which he could easily distinguish. You cannot imagine how much they were both ridiculed for their judgment. But who laughed in the end? On emptying the hog'shead, there was found at the bottom, an old key with a leathern thong tied to it.

The great resemblance between mental and bodily taste will easily teach us to apply this story. Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, no more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings. Now as these qualities may be found in a small degree or may be mixed and confounded with each other, it often happens, that the taste is not affected with such minute qualities, or is not able to distinguish all the particular flavours, amidst the disorder, in which they are presented. Where the organs are so fine, as to allow nothing to escape them; and at the same time so exact as to perceive every ingredient in the composition: This we call delicacy of taste, whether we employ these terms in the natural or metaphorical sense. Here then the general rules of beauty are of use; being drawn from established models, and from the observation of what pleases or displeases, when presented singly and in a high degree: And if the same qualities, in a continual composition and in a smaller degree, affect not the organs with a sensible delight or uneasiness, we exclude the person from all pretensions to this delicacy. To produce these general rules or avowed patterns of composition is like finding the key with the leathern thong; which justified the verdict of SANCHO's kinsmen, and confounded those pretended judges who had condemned them. Though the hog'shead had never been emptied, the taste of the one was still equally delicate, and that of the other equally dull and languid: But it would have been more difficult to have proved the superiority of the former, to the conviction of every by-stander. In like manner, though the beauties of writing



had never been methodized, or reduced to general principles; though no excellent models had ever been acknowledged; the different degrees of taste would still have subsisted, and the judgment of one man been preferable to that of another; but it would not have been so easy to silence the bad critic, who might always insist upon his particular sentiment, and refuse to submit to his antagonist. But when we show him an avowed principle of art; when we illustrate this principle by examples, whose operation, from his own particular taste, he acknowledges to be conformable to the principle; when we prove, that the same principle may be applied to the present case, where he did not perceive nor feel its influence: He must conclude, upon the whole, that the fault lies in himself, and that he wants the delicacy, which is requisite to make him sensible of every beauty and every blemish, in any composition or discourse.

'Tis acknowledged to be the perfection of every sense or faculty, to perceive with exactness its most minute objects, and allow nothing to escape its notice and observation. The smaller the objects are, which become sensible to the eye, the finer is that organ, and the more elaborate its make and composition. A good palate is not tried by strong flavours; but by a mixture of small ingredients, where we are still sensible of each part, notwithstanding its minuteness and its confusion with the rest. In like manner, a quick and acute perception of beauty and deformity must be the perfection of our mental taste, nor can a man be satisfied with himself while he suspects, that any excellence or blemish in a discourse has passed him unobserved. In this case, the perfection of the man, and the perfection of the sense or feeling, are found to be united. A very delicate palate, on many occasions, may be a great inconvenience both

to a man himself and to his friends: But a delicate taste of wit or beauty must always be a desirable quality; because it is the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments, of which human nature is susceptible. In this decision the sentiments of all mankind are agreed. Wherever you can fix or ascertain a delicacy of taste, it is sure to be approved of; and the best way of fixing it is to appeal to those models and principles, which have been established by the uniform approbation and experience of nations and ages.

But though there be naturally a very wide difference in point of delicacy between one person and another, nothing tends further to encrease and improve this talent, than *practice* in a particular art, and the frequent survey or contemplation of a particular species of beauty. When objects of any kind are first presented to the eye or imagination, the sentiment, which attends them, is ~~obscure and confused~~; and the mind is, in a great measure, incapable of pronouncing concerning their merits or defects. The taste cannot perceive the several excellencies of the performance; much less distinguish the particular character of each excellency, and ascertain its quality and degree. If it pronounce the whole in general to be beautiful or deformed, 'tis the utmost which can be expected; and even this judgment a person, so unpractised, will be apt to deliver with great hesitation and reserve. But allow him to acquire experience in those objects, his feeling becomes more exact and nice: He not only perceives the beauties and defects of each part, but marks the distinguishing species of each quality, and assigns it suitable praise or blame. A clear and distinct sentiment attends him through the whole survey of the objects; and he discerns that very degree and kind of approbation or



displeasure, which each part is naturally fitted to produce. The mist dissipates, which seemed formerly to hang over the object: The organ acquires greater perfection in its operations; and can pronounce, without danger of mistake, concerning the merits of each performance. In a word, the same address and dexterity, which practice gives to the execution of any work, is also acquired, by the same means, in the judging of it.

So advantageous is practice to the discernment of beauty, that before we can pronounce judgment on any work of importance, it will even be requisite, that that very individual performance be more than once perused by us, and be surveyed in different lights with attention and deliberation. There is a flutter or hurry of thought, which attends the first perusal of any piece, and which confounds the genuine sentiment of beauty. The reference of the parts is not discerned: The true characters of style are little distinguished: The several perfections and defects seem wrapped up in a species of confusion, and present themselves indistinctly to the imagination. Not to mention, that there is a species of beauty, which, as it is florid and superficial, pleases at first; but being found incompatible with a just expression either of reason or passion, soon palls upon the taste, and is then rejected with disdain, at least rated at a much lower value.

It is impossible to continue in the practice of contemplating any order of beauty, without being frequently obliged to form *comparisons* between the several species and degrees of excellency, and estimating their proportion to each other. A man, who has had no opportunity of comparing the different kinds of beauty, is indeed totally unqualified to pronounce an opinion with

with regard to any object presented to him. By comparison alone we fix the epithets of praise or blame, and learn how to assign the due degree of each. The coarsest dawbing of a sign-post contains a certain lustre of colours and exactness of imitation, which are so far beauties, and would affect the mind of a peasant or Indian with the highest admiration. The most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony or nature; and none but a person, familiarized to superior beauties, would pronounce their numbers harsh, or narration uninteresting. A great inferiority of beauty gives pain to a person conversant in the highest excellency of the kind, and is for that reason pronounced a deformity: As the most finished object, with which we are acquainted, is naturally supposed to have reached the pinnacle of perfection, and to be entitled to the highest applause. A man, who has had opportunities of seeing, and examining and weighing the several performances, admired in different ages and nations, ~~can alone~~ rate the merits of a work exhibited to his view, and assign its proper rank among the productions of genius.

But to enable him the more fully to execute this undertaking, he must preserve his mind free from all *prejudice*, and allow nothing to enter into his consideration, but the very object, which is submitted to his examination. We may observe, that every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that required by the performance. An orator addresses himself to a particular audience, and must have a regard to their particular genius, interests, opinions, passions, and prejudices; otherwise he hopes in vain to govern their resolutions,



lutions, and inflame their affections. Should they even have entertained some prepossessions against him, however unreasonable, he must not overlook this disadvantage; but before he enters upon the subject, must endeavour to conciliate their affection, and acquire their good graces. A critic of a different age or nation, who should peruse this discourse, must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment of the oration. In like manner, when any work is addressed to the public, though I should have a friendship or enmity with the author, I must depart from this particular situation; and considering myself as a man in general, forget, if possible, my individual being and my peculiar circumstances. A person, influenced by prejudice, complies not with this condition; but obstinately maintains his natural position, without entering into that required by the performance. If the work be addressed to persons of a different age or nation, he makes no allowance for their peculiar views and prejudices; but full of the manners of his own times, rashly condemns what seemed admirable in the eyes of those for whom alone the discourse was calculated. If the work be executed for the public, he never sufficiently enlarges his comprehension, or forgets his interest as a friend or enemy, as a rival or commentator. By this means, his sentiments are perverted; nor have the same beauties and blemishes the same influence upon him, as if he had imposed a proper violence on his imagination, and had forgot himself for a moment. So far his taste evidently departs from the true standard; and of consequence loses all credit and authority.

It is well known, that, in all questions, submitted to the understanding, prejudice is most destructive of sound judgment,  
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and perverts all operations of the intellectual faculties: It is no less contrary to good taste; nor has it less influence to corrupt our sentiments of beauty. It belongs to *good sense* to check its influence in both cases; and in this respect, as well as in many others, reason, if not an essential part of taste, is at least requisite to the operations of this latter faculty. In all the nobler productions of genius, there is a mutual relation and correspondence of parts; nor can either the beauties or blemishes be perceived by him, whose thought is not capacious enough to comprehend all those parts, and compare them with each other, in order to perceive the consistence and uniformity of the whole. Every work of art has also a certain end or purpose, for which it is calculated; and is to be deemed more or less perfect, as it is more or less fitted to attain this end. The object of eloquence is to persuade, of history to instruct, of poetry to please by means of the passions and the imagination. These ends we must ~~carry constantly~~ in our view, when we peruse any performance; and we must be able to judge how far the means employed are adapted to their respective purposes. Besides, every kind of composition, even the most poetical, is nothing but a chain of propositions and reasonings; not always indeed the justest and most exact, but still plausible and specious, however disguised by the colouring of the imagination. The persons, introduced in tragedy and epic poetry, must be represented as reasoning and thinking, and concluding and acting, suitable to their characters and circumstances; and without judgment, as well as taste and invention, a poet can never hope to succeed in so delicate an undertaking. Not to mention, that the same excellence of faculties which contributes to the improvement of reason, the same clearness of conception, the

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same exactness of distinction, the same vivacity of apprehension, are essential to the operations of true taste, and are its infallible concomitants. It seldom, or never happens, that a man of sense, who has experience in any art, cannot judge of its beauty; and it is no less rare to meet with a man, who has a just taste, without a sound understanding.

Thus, though the principles of taste be universal, and nearly, if not entirely the same in all men; yet few are qualified to give judgment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles their full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles. They either labour under some defect, or are vitiated by some disorder; and by that means, excite a sentiment, which may be pronounced erroneous. When the critic has no delicacy, he judges without any distinction, and is only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object: The finer touches pass unnoticed and disregarded. Where he is not aided by practice, his verdict is attended with confusion and hesitation. Where no comparison has been employed, the most frivolous beauties, such as rather merit the name of defects, are the objects of his admiration. Where he lies under the influence of prejudice, all his natural sentiments are perverted. Where good sense is wanting, he is not qualified to discern the beauties of design and reasoning, which are the highest and most excellent. Under some or other of these imperfections, the generality of men labour; and hence a true judge in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character: Strong sense united to delicate  
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sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty.

But where are such critics to be found? By what marks are they to be known? How distinguish them from pretenders? These questions are embarrassing; and seem to throw us back into the same uncertainty, from which, during the course of this essay, we have endeavoured to extricate ourselves.

But if we consider the matter aright, these are questions of fact, not of sentiment. Whether any particular person be endowed with good sense and a delicate imagination, free from prejudice, may often be the subject of dispute, and be liable to great discussion and enquiry: But that such a character is valuable and estimable, ~~will be~~ agreed by all mankind. Where these doubts occur, men can do no more than in other disputable questions, which are submitted to the understanding: They must produce the best arguments, which their invention suggests to them: they must acknowledge a true and decisive standard to exist somewhere, to wit, real existence and matter of fact; and they must have indulgence to such as differ from them in their appeals to this standard. It is sufficient for our present purpose, if we have proved, that the taste of all individuals is not upon an equal footing, and that some men in general, however difficult to be particularly pitched upon, will be acknowledged by universal sentiment to have a preference above others.



But in reality the difficulty of finding, even in particulars, the standard of taste, is not so great as it is represented. Though in speculation, we may readily avow a certain criterion in science and deny it in sentiment, the matter is found in practice to be much more hard to ascertain in the former case than in the latter. Theories of abstract philosophy, systems of profound theology have prevailed during one age: In a successive period, these have been universally exploded: Their absurdity has been detected: Other theories and systems have supplied their place, which again gave way to their successors: And nothing has been experienced more liable to the revolutions of chance and fashion than these pretended decisions of science. The case is not the same with the beauties of eloquence and poetry. Just expressions of passion and nature are sure, after a little time, to gain public vogue, which they maintain for ever. ARISTOTLE and PLATO, EPICURUS and DESCARTES, may successively yield to each other: But TERENCE and VIRGIL maintain an universal, undisputed empire over the minds of men. The abstract philosophy of CICERO has lost its credit: The vehemence of his oratory is still the object of our admiration.

Though men of delicate taste are rare, they are easily to be distinguished in society by the soundness of their understanding and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of mankind. The ascendant, which they acquire, gives a prevalence to that lively approbation, with which they receive any production of genius, and renders it generally predominant. Many men, when left to themselves, have but a faint and dubious perception of beauty, who yet are capable of relishing

any fine stroke, which is pointed out to them. Every convert to the admiration of the real poet or orator is the cause of some new conversion. And though prejudices may prevail for a time, they never unite in celebrating any rival to the true genius, but yield at last to the force of nature and just sentiment. And thus though a civilized nation may easily be mistaken in the choice of their admired philosopher, they never have been found long to err, in their affection for a favourite epic or tragic author.

But notwithstanding all our endeavours to fix a standard of taste, and reconcile the discordant apprehensions of men, there still remain two sources of variation, which are not sufficient indeed to confound all the boundaries of beauty and deformity, but will often serve to produce a difference in the degrees of our approbation or blame. The one is the different humours of particular men; the other, the particular manners and opinions of our age and country. The general principles of taste are uniform in human nature: Where men vary in their judgments, some defect or perversion in the faculties may commonly be remarked; proceeding either from prejudice, from want of practice, or want of delicacy; and there is just reason for approving one taste, and condemning another. But where there is such a diversity in the internal frame or external situation as is entirely blameless on both sides, and leaves no room to give one the preference above the other; in that case a certain diversity of judgment is unavoidable, and we seek in vain for a standard, by which we can reconcile the contrary sentiments.

A young man, whose passions are warm, will be more sensibly touched with amorous and tender images, than a man



more advanced in years, who takes pleasure in wise and philosophical reflections concerning the conduct of life and moderation of the passions. At twenty, OVID may be the favourite author; HORACE at forty; and perhaps TACITUS at fifty. Vainly would we, in such cases, endeavour to enter into the sentiments of others, and divest ourselves of those propensities, which are natural to us. We chuse our favourite author as we do our friend, from a conformity of humours and dispositions. Mirth or passion, sentiment or reflection; which ever of these most predominates in our temper, it gives us a peculiar sympathy with the writer who resembles us.

One person is more pleased with the sublime; another with the tender; a third with raillery. One has a strong sensibility to blemishes, and is extremely studious of correctness: Another has a more lively feeling of beauties, and pardons twenty absurdities and defects for one elevated or pathetic stroke. The ear of this man is entirely turned towards conciseness and energy; that man is delighted with a copious, rich, and harmonious expression. Simplicity is affected by one; ornament by another. Comedy, tragedy, satire, odes have each their partizans, who prefer that particular species of writing to all others. It is plainly an error in a critic, to confine his approbation to one species or style of writing, and condemn all the rest. But it is almost impossible not to feel a predilection for that which suits our particular turn and disposition. Such preferences are innocent and unavoidable, and can never reasonably be the object of dispute, because there is no standard, by which they can be decided.

For a like reason, we are more pleased with pictures of characters, which resemble such as are found in our own age or country, than with those which describe a different set of customs. 'Tis not without some effort, that we reconcile ourselves to the simplicity of antient manners, and behold princesses drawing water from a spring, and kings and heroes dressing their own victuals. We may allow in general, that the representation of such manners is no fault in the author, nor deformity in the piece; but we are not so sensibly touched with them. For this reason, comedy is not transferred easily from one age or nation to another. A FRENCHMAN or ENGLISHMAN is not pleased with the *ANDRIA* of *TERENCE*, or *CLITIA* of *MACHIAVEL*, where the fine lady, upon whom all the play turns, never once appears to the spectators, but is always kept behind the scenes, suitable to the reserved humour of the antient GREEKS and modern ITALIANS. A man of learning and reflection can make allowance for these peculiarities of manners; but a common audience can never divest themselves so far of their usual ideas and sentiments as to relish pictures which nowise resemble them.

And here there occurs a reflection, which may, perhaps, be useful in examining the celebrated controversy concerning antient and modern learning; where we often find the one side excusing any seeming absurdity in the antients from the manners of the age, and the other refusing to admit this excuse, or at least, admitting it only as an apology for the author, not for the performance. In my opinion, the proper bounds in this subject have seldom been fixed between the contending parties. Where any innocent peculiarities of manners are represented, such as those abovementioned, they ought certainly to be



be admitted; and a man who is shocked with them, gives an evident proof of false delicacy and refinement. The poets *monument more durable than brass*, must fall to the ground like common brick or clay, were men to make no allowance for the continual revolutions of manners and customs, and would admit nothing but what was suitable to the prevailing fashion. Must we throw aside the pictures of our ancestors, because of their ruffs and fardingales? But where the ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation; this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper I should, enter into such sentiments; and however I may excuse the poet, on account of the manners of his age, I never can relish the composition. The want of humanity and of decency, so conspicuous in the characters drawn by several of the antient poets, even sometimes by HOMER and the GREEK tragedians, diminishes considerably the merit of their noble performances, and gives modern authors a great advantage over them. We are not interested in the fortunes and sentiments of such rough heroes: We are displeased to find the limits of vice and virtue so confounded: And whatever indulgence we may give the writer on account of his prejudices, we cannot prevail on ourselves to enter into his sentiments, or bear an affection to characters, which we plainly discover to be blameable.

The case is not the same with moral principles, as with speculative opinions of any kind. These are in continual flux and revolution. The son embraces a different system from the father. Nay, there scarce is any man, who can boast of great

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constancy and uniformity in this particular. Whatever speculative errors may be found in the polite writings of any age or country, they detract but little from the value of those compositions. There needs but a certain turn of thought or imagination to make us enter into all the opinions, which then prevailed, and relish the sentiments or conclusions derived from them. But a very violent effort is requisite to change our judgment of manners, and excite sentiments of approbation or blame, love or hatred, different from those to which the mind from long custom has been familiarized. And where a man is confident of the rectitude of that moral standard, by which he judges, he is justly jealous of it, and will not pervert the sentiments of his heart for a moment, in complaisance to any writer whatever.

Of all speculative errors, those which regard religion, are the most excusable in compositions of genius; nor is it ever permitted to judge of the civility or wisdom of any people, or even of single persons, by the grossness or refinement of their theological principles. The same good sense, that directs men in the ordinary occurrences of life, is not hearkened to in religious matters, which are supposed to be placed entirely above the cognizance of human reason. Upon this account, all the absurdities of the pagan system of theology must be overlooked by every critic, who would pretend to form a just notion of antient poetry; and our posterity, in their turn, must have the same indulgence to their forefathers. No religious principles can ever be imputed as a fault to any poet, while they remain merely principles, and take not such strong possession of his heart, as to lay him under the imputation of *bigotry* or *superstition*.



*fition.* Where that happens, they confound the sentiments of morality, and alter the natural boundaries of vice and virtue. They are therefore eternal blemishes, according to the principle abovementioned; nor are the prejudices and false opinions of the age sufficient to justify them.

'Tis essential to the ROMAN catholic religion to inspire a violent hatred to every other worship, and represent all pagans, mahometans, and heretics as the objects of divine wrath and vengeance. Such sentiments, though they are in reality extremely blameable, are considered as virtues by the zealots of that communion, and are represented in their tragedies and epic poems as a kind of divine heroism. This bigotry has disfigured two very fine tragedies of the FRENCH theatre, POLIEUCTE and ATHALIA; where an intemperate zeal for particular modes of worship is set off with all the pomp imaginable, and forms the predominant character of the heroes. "What is this," says the heroic JOAD to JOSABET, finding her in discourse with MATHAN, the priest of BAAL, "Does the daughter of DAVID speak to this traitor? Are you not afraid, lest the earth should open and pour forth flames to devour you both? Or lest these holy walls should fall and crush you together? What is his purpose? Why comes that enemy of God hither to poison the air, which we breathe, with his horrid presence?" Such sentiments are received with great applause on the theatre of PARIS; but at LONDON the spectators would be full as much pleased to hear ACHILLES tell AGAMEMNON, that he was a dog in his forehead, and a deer in his heart, or JUPITER threaten JUNO with a sound drubbing, if she will not be quiet.

RELIGIOUS principles are also a blemish in any polite composition, when they rise up to superstition, and intrude themselves into every sentiment, however remote from any connection with religion. 'Tis no excuse for the poet, that the customs of his country had burthened life with so many religious ceremonies and observances, that no part of it was exempt from that yoke. It must be for ever ridiculous in PETRARCH to compare his mistress, LAURA, to JESUS CHRIST. Nor is it less ridiculous in that agreeable libertine, BOCCACE, very seriously to give thanks to GOD ALMIGHTY, and the ladies, for their assistance in defending him against his enemies.



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E S S A Y S,  
M O R A L, P O L I T I C A L,  
A N D,  
L I T E R A R Y.  
P A R T II.\*

\* Published in 1752.





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# ESSAY I.

## OF COMMERCE.

THE greatest part of mankind may be divided into two classes; that of *shallow* thinkers, who fall short of the truth; and that of *abstruse* thinkers, who go beyond it. The latter class are by far the most uncommon; and I may add, by far the most useful and valuable. They suggest hints, at least, and start difficulties, which they want, perhaps, skill to pursue; but which may produce very fine discoveries, when handled by men who have a more just way of thinking. At worst, what they say is uncommon; and if it should cost some pains to comprehend it, one has, however, the pleasure of hearing something that is new. An author is little to be valued, who tells us nothing but what we can learn from every coffee-house conversation.

All people of *shallow* thought are apt to decry even those of *solid* understanding, as *abstruse* thinkers, and metaphysicians, and refiners; and never will allow any thing to be just which is beyond their own weak conceptions. There are some cases, I own, where an extraordinary refinement affords a strong presumption of falsehood, and where no reasoning is to be trusted but what is natural and easy. When a man deliberates concerning his conduct in any *particular* affair, and forms  
schemes



schemes in politics, trade, œconomy, or any business in life, he never ought to draw his arguments too fine, or connect too long a chain of consequences together. Something is sure to happen, that will disconcert his reasoning, and produce an event different from what he expected. But when we reason upon *general* subjects, one may justly affirm, that our speculations can scarce ever be too fine, provided they be just; and that the difference between a common man and a man of genius is chiefly seen in the shallowness or depth of the principles upon which they proceed. General reasonings seem intricate, merely because they are general; nor is it easy for the bulk of mankind to distinguish, in a great number of particulars, that common circumstance in which they all agree, or to extract it, pure and unmixed, from the other superfluous circumstances. Every judgment or conclusion, with them, is particular. They cannot enlarge their view to those universal propositions, which comprehend under them an infinite number of individuals, and include a whole science in a single theorem. Their eye is confounded with such an extensive prospect; and the conclusions derived from it, even though clearly expressed, seem intricate and obscure. But however intricate they may seem, 'tis certain, that general principles, if just and sound, must always prevail in the general course of things, though they may fail in particular cases; and 'tis the chief business of philosophers to regard the general course of things. I may add, that 'tis also the chief business of politicians; especially in the domestic government of the state, where the public good, which is, or ought to be their object, depends on the concurrence of a multitude of cases; not, as in foreign politics, on accidents and chances, and the caprices of a few persons. This

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therefore makes the difference between *particular* deliberations and *general* reasonings, and renders subtilty and refinement much more suitable to the latter than to the former.

I thought this introduction necessary before the following discourses on *commerce, money, interest, balance of trade, &c.* where, perhaps, there will occur some principles which are uncommon, and which may seem too refined and subtle for such vulgar subjects. If false, let them be rejected: But no one ought to entertain a prejudice against them, merely because they are out of the common road.

The greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, however independent they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive greater security in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the riches and extensive commerce of private men. This maxim is true in general; though I cannot forbear thinking, that it may possibly admit of some exceptions, and that we often establish it with too little reserve and limitation. There may be some circumstances, where the commerce, and riches, and luxury of individuals, instead of adding strength to the public, will serve only to thin its armies, and diminish its authority among the neighbouring nations. Man is a very variable being, and susceptible of many different opinions, principles, and rules of conduct. What may be true while he adheres to one way of thinking, will be found false when he has embraced an opposite set of manners and opinions.



The bulk of every state may be divided into *husbandmen* and *manufacturers*. The former are employed in the culture of the land: The latter work up the materials furnished by the former, into all the commodities which are necessary and ornamental to human life. As soon as men quit their savage state, where they live chiefly by hunting and fishing, they must fall into these two classes; though the arts of agriculture employ *at first* the most numerous part of the society †. Time and experience improve so much these arts, that the land may easily maintain a much greater number of men, than those who are immediately employed in its cultivation, or who furnish the more necessary manufactures to such as are so employed.

If these superfluous hands apply themselves to the finer arts, which are commonly denominated the arts of *luxury*, they add to the happiness of the state; since they afford to many the opportunity of receiving enjoyments, with which they would otherwise have been unacquainted. But may not another scheme be proposed for the employment of these superfluous hands? May not the sovereign lay claim to them, and employ them in fleets and armies, to increase the dominions of the state abroad, and spread its fame over distant nations? 'Tis certain, that the fewer desires and wants are found in the proprietors and labourers of land, the fewer hands do they employ; and consequently the superfluities of the land, instead of maintaining

† Monsr. MELON, in his political essay on commerce, asserts, that even at present, if you divide FRANCE into 20 parts, 16 are labourers or peasants; 2 only artisans; one belonging to the law, church, and military; and one merchants, financiers, and bourgeois. This calculation is certainly very erroneous. In FRANCE, ENGLAND, and indeed most parts of EUROPE, half of the inhabitants live in cities; and even of those who live in the country, a very great number are artisans, perhaps above a third.

tradesmen and manufacturers, may support fleets and armies to a much greater extent, than where a great many arts are required to minister to the luxury of particular persons. Here therefore seems to be a kind of opposition between the greatness of the state and the happiness of the subjects. A state is never greater than when all its superfluous hands are employed in the service of the public. The ease and convenience of private persons require, that these should be employed in their service. The one can never be satisfied, but at the expence of the other. As the ambition of the sovereign must entrench on the luxury of individuals; so the luxury of individuals must diminish the force, and check the ambition of the sovereign.

Nor is this reasoning merely chimerical; but is founded on history and experience. The republic of SPARTA was certainly more powerful than any state now in the world, consisting of an equal number of people: and this was owing entirely to the want of commerce and luxury. The HELOTES were the labourers: The SPARTANS were the foldiers or gentlemen. 'Tis evident, that the labour of the HELOTES could not have maintained so great a number of SPARTANS, had these latter lived in ease and delicacy, and given employment to a great variety of trades and manufactures. The like policy may be remarked in ROME. And indeed, through all ancient history, 'tis observable, that the smallest republics raised and maintained greater armies, than states consisting of triple the number of inhabitants, are able to support at present. 'Tis computed, that, in all EUROPEAN nations, the proportion between foldiers and people does not exceed one to a hundred. But we read, that the city of ROME alone, with its

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small territory, raised and maintained, in early times, ten legions against the LATINS. ATHENS, whose whole dominions were not larger than YORKSHIRE, sent to the expedition against SICILY near forty thousand men†. DIONYSIUS the elder, 'tis said, maintained a standing army of an hundred thousand foot and ten thousand horse, beside a large fleet of four hundred sail‡; though his territories extended no farther than the city of SYRACUSE, about a third part of the island of SICILY, and some sea-port towns or garrisons on the coast of ITALY and ILLYRICUM. 'Tis true, the ancient armies, in time of war, subsisted much upon plunder: But did not the enemy plunder in their turn? which was a more ruinous way of levying a tax, than any other that could be devised. In short, no probable reason can be assigned for the great power of the more antient states above the modern, but their want of commerce and luxury. Few artificers were maintained by the labour of the farmers, and therefore more soldiers might live upon it. TITUS LIVIUS says, that ROME, in his time, would find it difficult to raise as large an army as that which, in her early days, she sent out against the GAULS and LATINS\*. Instead of those soldiers who fought for liberty and empire in CAMILLUS's time, there were in AUGUSTUS's days, musicians, painters, cooks, players, and tailors; and if the land was equally cultivated at both periods, 'tis evident it could maintain equal numbers in the one profession as in the other.

† THUCYDIDES, lib. 7.

‡ DIOD. SIC. lib. 2. This account, I own, is somewhat suspicious, not to say worse; chiefly because this army was not composed of citizens, but of mercenary forces.

\* TITUS LIVIUS, lib. 7. cap. 24. "Adeo in quæ laboramus," says he, "sola crevimus, divitias luxuriamque."

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They added nothing to the mere necessities of life, in the latter period more than in the former.

'Tis natural on this occasion to ask, whether sovereigns may not return to the maxims of antient policy, and consult their own interest in this respect, more than the happiness of their subjects? I answer, that it appears to me almost impossible; and that because antient policy was violent, and contrary to the more natural and usual course of things. 'Tis well known with what peculiar laws SPARTA was governed, and what a prodigy that republic is justly esteemed by every one, who has considered human nature, as it has displayed itself in other nations, and other ages. Were the testimony of history less positive and circumstantial, such a government would appear a mere philosophical whim or fiction, and impossible ever to be reduced to practice. And though the ROMAN and other antient republics were supported on principles somewhat more natural, yet was there a very extraordinary concurrence of circumstances to make them submit to such grievous burthens. They were free states; they were small ones; and the age being martial, all the neighbouring states were continually in arms. Freedom naturally begets public spirit, especially in small states; and this public spirit, this *amor patriæ*, must increase, when the public is almost in continual alarm, and men are obliged, every moment, to expose themselves to the greatest dangers for its defence. A continual succession of wars makes every citizen a soldier: He takes the field in his turn; and during his service is chiefly maintained by himself. And notwithstanding that his service is equivalent to a very severe tax, 'tis less felt by a people addicted to arms, who fight for honour and

revenge more than pay, and are unacquainted with gain and industry as well as pleasure\*. Not to mention the great equality of fortunes amongst the inhabitants of the antient republics, where every field belonging to a different proprietor, was able to maintain a family, and rendered the numbers of citizens very considerable, even without trade or manufactures.

But though the want of trade and manufactures, amongst a free and very martial people, may *sometimes* have no other effect than to render the public more powerful, 'tis certain, that in the common course of human affairs, it will have a quite contrary tendency. Sovereigns must take mankind as they find them, and cannot pretend to introduce any violent change in their principles and ways of thinking. A long course of time, with a variety of accidents and circumstances, are requisite to produce those great revolutions, which so much diversify the face of human affairs. And the less natural any set of principles are, which support a particular society, the more difficulty will a legislator meet with in raising and cultivating them.

\* The more antient ROMANS lived in perpetual war with all their neighbours: and in old LATIN, the term, *hostis*, expressed both a stranger and an enemy. This is remarked by CICERO; but by him is ascribed to the humanity of his ancestors, who softened, as much as possible, the denomination of an enemy, by calling him by the same appellation which signified a stranger. *De Off.* lib. 2. 'Tis however much more probable, from the manners of the times, that the ferocity of those people was so great as to make them regard all strangers as enemies, and call them by the same name. It is not, besides, consistent with the most common maxims of policy or of nature, that any state should regard its public enemies with a friendly eye, or preserve any such sentiments for them as the ROMAN orator would ascribe to his ancestors. Not to mention, that the early ROMANS really exercised piracy, as we learn from their first treaties with CARTHAGE, preserved by POLYBIUS, lib. 3. and consequently, like the SALLÉE and ALGERINE rovers, were actually at war with most nations, and a stranger and an enemy were with them almost synonymous.

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'Tis his best policy to comply with the common bent of mankind, and give it all the improvements of which it is susceptible. Now, according to the most natural course of things, industry, and arts, and trade increase the power of the sovereign as well as the happiness of the subjects; and that policy is violent, which aggrandizes the public by the poverty of individuals. This will easily appear from a few considerations, which will present to us the consequences of sloth and barbarity.

Where manufactures and mechanic arts are not cultivated, the bulk of the people must apply themselves to agriculture; and if their skill and industry increase, there must arise a great superfluity from their labour beyond what suffices to maintain them. They have no temptation, therefore, to encrease their skill and industry; since they cannot exchange that superfluity for any commodities, which may serve either to their pleasure or vanity. A habit of indolence naturally prevails. The greater part of the land lies uncultivated. What is cultivated, yields not its utmost, for want of skill or assiduity in the farmers. If at any time the public exigencies require, that great numbers should be employed in the public service, the labour of the people furnishes now no superfluities, by which these numbers can be maintained. The labourers cannot increase their skill and industry on a sudden. Lands uncultivated cannot be brought into tillage for some years. The armies, meanwhile, must either make sudden and violent conquests, or disband for want of subsistence. A regular attack or defence therefore, is not to be expected from such a people, and their soldiers must be as ignorant and unskilful as their farmers and manufacturers.

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Every thing in the world is purchased by labour; and our passions are the only causes of labour. When a nation abounds in manufactures and mechanic arts, the proprietors of land, as well as the farmers, study agriculture as a science, and redouble their industry and attention. The superfluity which arises from their labour, is not lost; but is exchanged with the manufacturers for those commodities which mens luxury now makes them covet. By this means, land furnishes a great deal more of the necessaries of life, than what suffices for those who cultivate it. In times of peace and tranquillity, this superfluity goes to the maintenance of manufacturers, and the improvers of liberal arts. But 'tis easy for the public to convert many of these manufacturers into soldiers, and maintain them by that superfluity, which arises from the labour of the farmers. Accordingly we find, that this is the case in all civilized governments. When the sovereign raises an army, what is the consequence? He imposes a tax. This tax obliges all the people to retrench what is least necessary to their subsistence. Those who labour in such commodities, must either enlist in the troops, or turn themselves to agriculture, and thereby oblige some labourers to enlist for want of business. And to consider the matter abstractly, manufactures increase the power of the state only as they store up so much labour, and that of a kind to which the public may lay claim, without depriving any one of the necessaries of life. The more labour, therefore, is employed beyond mere necessaries, the more powerful is any state; since the persons engaged in that labour may easily be converted to the public service. In a state without manufactures there may be the same number of hands; but there is not the same quantity of labour, nor of the same kind. All the labour is there  
bestowed

bestowed upon necessaries, which can admit of little or no abatement.

Thus the greatness of the sovereign and the happiness of the state are, in a great measure, united with regard to trade and manufactures. 'Tis a violent method, and in most cases impracticable, to oblige the labourer to toil, in order to raise from the land more than what subsists himself and family. Furnish him with manufactures and commodities, and he will do it of himself. Afterwards you will find it easy to seize some part of his superfluous labour, and employ it in the public service, without giving him his wonted return. Being accustomed to industry, he will think this less grievous, than if, at once, you obliged him to an augmentation of labour without any reward. The case is the same with regard to the other members of the state. The greater is the stock of labour of all kinds, the greater quantity may be taken from the heap, without making any sensible alteration upon it.

A public granary of corn, a storehouse of cloth, a magazine of arms; all these must be allowed real riches and strength in any state. Trade and industry are really nothing but a stock of labour, which, in time of peace and tranquillity, is employed for the ease and satisfaction of individuals; but in the exigencies of state, may, in part, be turned to public advantage. Could we convert a city into a kind of fortified camp, and infuse into each breast so martial a genius, and such a passion for public good, as to make every one willing to undergo the greatest hardships for the sake of the public; these affections might now, as in ancient times, prove alone a sufficient spur to industry, and support the community. It would then be advantageous,



vantageous, as in camps, to banish all arts and luxury; and, by restrictions on equipage and tables, make the provisions and forage last longer than if the army were loaded with a number of superfluous retainers. But as these principles are too disinterested and too difficult to support, 'tis requisite to govern men by other passions, and animate them with a spirit of avarice and industry, art and luxury. The camp is, in this case, loaded with a superfluous retinue; but the provisions flow in proportionably larger. The harmony of the whole is still supported; and the natural bent of the mind being more complied with, individuals, as well as the public, find their account in the observance of those maxims.

The same method of reasoning will let us see the advantage of *foreign* commerce, in augmenting the power of the state, as well as the riches and happiness of the subjects. It increases the stock of labour in the nation; and the sovereign may convert what share of it he finds necessary to the service of the public. Foreign trade, by its imports, furnishes materials for new manufactures; and by its exports, it produces labour in particular commodities, which could not be consumed at home. In short, a kingdom, that has a large import and export, must abound more with industry, and that employed upon delicacies and luxuries, than a kingdom which rests contented with its native commodities. It is, therefore, more powerful, as well as richer and happier. The individuals reap the benefit of these commodities, so far as they gratify the senses and appetites. And the public is also a gainer, while a greater stock of labour is, by this means, stored up against any public exigency; that is, a greater number of laborious men are maintained, who may  
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be diverted to the public service, without robbing any one of the necessaries, or even the chief conveniencies of life.

If we consult history, we shall find, that in most nations foreign trade has preceded any refinement in home-manufactures, and given birth to domestic luxury. The temptation is stronger to make use of foreign commodities, which are ready for use, and which are entirely new to us, than to make improvements on any domestic commodity, which always advance by slow degrees, and never affect us by their novelty. The profit is also very great in exporting what is superfluous at home, and what bears no price, to foreign nations, whose soil or climate is not favourable to that commodity. Thus men become acquainted with the *pleasures* of luxury and the *profits* of commerce; and their *delicacy* and *industry*, being once awakened, carry them to farther improvements, in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade. And this perhaps is the chief advantage which arises from a commerce with strangers. It rouses men from their indolence; and presenting the gayer and more opulent part of the nation with objects of luxury, which they never before dreamed of, raises in them a desire of a more splendid way of life than what their ancestors enjoyed, and at the same time, the few merchants, who possess the secret of this importation and exportation, make exorbitant profits; and becoming rivals in wealth to the ancient nobility, tempt other adventurers to become their rivals in commerce. Imitation soon diffuses all those arts; while domestic manufacturers emulate the foreign in their improvements, and work up every home commodity to the utmost perfection of which it is susceptible. Their own steel and iron, in such laborious hands, become equal to the gold and rubies of the INDIES.

When the affairs of the society are once brought to this situation, a nation may lose most of its foreign trade, and yet continue a great and powerful people. If strangers will not take any particular commodity of ours, we must cease to labour in it. The same hands will turn themselves towards some refinement in other commodities, which may be wanted at home. And there must always be materials for them to work upon; till every person in the state, who possesses riches, enjoys as great plenty of home commodities, and those in as great perfection, as he desires; which can never possibly happen. CHINA is represented as one of the most flourishing empires in the world; though it has very little commerce beyond its own territories.

It will not, I hope, be considered as a superfluous digression, if I here observe, that as the multitude of mechanical arts is advantageous, so is the great number of persons to whose share the productions of these arts fall. A too great disproportion among the citizens weakens any state. Every person, if possible, ought to enjoy the fruits of his labour, in a full possession of all the necessaries, and many of the conveniencies of life. No one can doubt, but such an equality is most suitable to human nature, and diminishes much less from the *happiness* of the rich than it adds to that of the poor. It also augments the *power of the state*, and makes any extraordinary taxes or impositions be paid with much more chearfulness. Where the riches are engrossed by a few, these must contribute very largely to the supplying the public necessities. But when the riches are dispersed among multitudes, the burthen feels light on every shoulder, and the taxes make not a very sensible difference on any one's way of living.

Add



Add to this, that where the riches are in few hands, these must enjoy all the power, and will readily conspire to lay the whole burthen on the poor, and oppress them still farther, to the discouragement of all industry.

In this circumstance consists the great advantage of ENGLAND above any nation at present in the world, or that appears in the records of story. 'Tis true, the ENGLISH feel some disadvantages in foreign trade by the high price of labour, which is in part the effect of the riches of their artisans, as well as of the plenty of money : But as foreign trade is not the most material circumstance, 'tis not to be put in competition with the happiness of so many millions. And if there were no more to endear to them that free government under which they live, this alone were sufficient. The poverty of the common people is a natural, if not an infallible effect of absolute monarchy ; though I doubt, whether it be always true, on the other hand, that their riches are an infallible result of liberty. Liberty must be attended with particular accidents, and a certain turn of thinking, in order to produce that effect. Lord BACON, accounting for the great advantages obtained by the ENGLISH in their wars with FRANCE, ascribes them chiefly to the superior ease and plenty of the common people amongst the former ; yet the government of the two kingdoms were, at that time, pretty much alike. Where the labourers and artizans are accustomed to work for low wages, and to retain but a small part of the fruits of their labour, 'tis difficult for them, even in a free government, to better their condition, or conspire among themselves to heighten their wages. But even where they are accustomed to a more plentiful way of life, 'tis easy for the rich, in a despotic govern-

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ment, to conspire against *them*, and throw the whole burthen of the taxes on their shoulders.

It may seem an odd position, that the poverty of the common people in FRANCE, ITALY, and SPAIN, is, in some measure, owing to the superior riches of the soil and happiness of the climate; and yet there want not many reasons to justify this paradox. In such a fine mold or soil as that of those more southern regions, agriculture is an easy art; and one man, with a couple of sorry horses, will be able, in a season, to cultivate as much land as will pay a pretty considerable rent to the proprietor. All the art, which the farmer knows, is to leave his ground fallow for a year, so soon as it is exhausted; and the warmth of the sun alone and temperature of the climate enrich it, and restore its fertility. Such poor peasants, therefore, require only a simple maintenance for their labour. They have no stock nor riches, which claim more; and at the same time, they are for ever dependant on their landlord, who gives no leases, nor fears that his land will be spoiled by the ill methods of cultivation. In ENGLAND, the land is rich, but coarse; must be cultivated at a great expence; and produces slender crops, when not carefully managed, and by a method which gives not the full profit but in a course of several years. A farmer, therefore, in ENGLAND must have a considerable stock and a long lease; which beget proportional profits. The fine vineyards of CHAMPAGNE and BURGUNDY, that oft yield to the landlord above five pounds *per* acre, are cultivated by peasants, who have scarce bread: And the reason is, that such peasants need no stock but their own limbs, with instruments of husbandry, which they can buy for twenty shillings. The farmers are commonly in some better circumstances in those countries. But  
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the graziers are most at their ease of all those who cultivate the land. The reason is still the same. Men must have profits proportionable to their expence and hazard. Where so considerable a number of labouring poor as the peasants and farmers are in very low circumstances, all the rest must partake of their poverty whether the government of that nation be monarchical or republican.

We may form a similar remark with regard to the general history of mankind. What is the reason, why no people living between the tropics could ever yet attain to any art or civility, or reach even any police in their government, and any military discipline; while few nations in the temperate climates have been altogether deprived of these advantages? 'Tis probable, that one cause of this phenomenon is the warmth and equality of weather in the torrid zone, which render cloaths and houses less requisite for the inhabitants, and thereby remove, in part, that necessity, which is the great spur to industry and invention. *Curis acuens mortalia corda.* Not to mention, that the fewer goods or possessions of this kind any people enjoy, the fewer quarrels are likely to arise amongst them, and the less necessity will there be for a settled police or regular authority to protect and defend them from foreign enemies, or from each other.



## E S S A Y II.

### OF REFINEMENT IN THE ARTS.

**L**UXURY is a word of a very uncertain signification, and may be taken in a good as well as in a bad sense. In general, it means great refinement in the gratification of the senses; and any degree of it may be innocent or blameable, according to the age, or country, or condition of the person. The bounds between the virtue and the vice cannot here be fixed exactly, more than in other moral subjects. To imagine, that the gratifying any of the senses, or the indulging any delicacy in meats, drinks, or apparel, is in itself a vice, can never enter into a head, that is not disordered by the frenzies of enthusiasm. I have, indeed, heard of a monk abroad, who, because the windows of his cell opened upon a very noble prospect, made a *covenant with his eyes* never to turn that way, or receive so sensual a gratification. And such is the crime of drinking CHAMPAGNE or BURGUNDY, preferably to small beer or porter. These indulgences are only vices, when they are pursued at the expence of some virtue, as liberality or charity; in like manner as they are follies, when for them a man ruins his fortune, and reduces himself to want and beggary. Where they entrench upon no virtue, but leave ample subject whence to provide for friends, family, and every proper object of generosity

rosity or compassion, they are intirely innocent, and have in every age been acknowledged such by almost all moralists. To be intirely occupied with the luxury of the table, for instance, without any relish for the pleasures of ambition, study, or conversation, is a mark of gross stupidity, and is incompatible with any vigour of temper or genius. To confine one's expence intirely to such a gratification, without regard to friends or family, is an indication of a heart intirely devoid of humanity or benevolence. But if a man reserve time sufficient for all laudable pursuits, and money sufficient for all generous purposes, he is free from every shadow of blame or reproach.

Since luxury may be considered either as innocent or blameable, one may be surprized at those preposterous opinions which have been entertained concerning it; while men of libertine principles bestow praises even on vicious luxury, and represent it as highly advantageous to society; and on the other hand, men of severe morals blame even the most innocent luxury, and regard it as the source of all the corruptions, disorders, and factions, incident to civil government. We shall here endeavour to correct both these extremes, by proving, *first*, that the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous; *secondly*, that wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree too far, is a quality pernicious, though perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society.

To prove the first point, we need but consider the effects of refinement both on *private* and on *public* life. Human happiness, according to the most received notions, seems to consist in three ingredients; action, pleasure, and indolence: And though these

these ingredients ought to be mixed in different proportions, according to the particular dispositions of the person; yet no one ingredient can be entirely wanting, without destroying, in some measure, the relish of the whole composition. Indolence or repose, indeed, seems not of itself to contribute much to our enjoyment; but, like sleep, is requisite as an indulgence to the weakness of human nature, which cannot support an uninterrupted course of business or pleasure. That quick march of the spirits, which takes a man from himself, and chiefly gives satisfaction, does in the end exhaust the mind, and requires some intervals of repose, which, though agreeable for a moment, yet, if prolonged, beget a languor and lethargy, that destroy all enjoyment. Education, custom, and example, have a mighty influence in turning the mind to any of these pursuits; and it must be owned, that where they promote a relish for action and pleasure, they are so far favourable to human happiness. In times when industry and arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and enjoy, as their reward, the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures which are the fruits of their labour. The mind acquires new vigour; enlarges its powers and faculties; and by an assiduity in honest industry, both satisfies its natural appetites, and prevents the growth of unnatural ones, which commonly spring up, when nourished with ease and idleness. Banish those arts from society, you deprive men both of action and of pleasure; and leaving nothing but indolence in their place, you even destroy the relish of indolence, which never is agreeable, but when it succeeds to labour, and recruits the spirits, exhausted by too much application and fatigue.

Another



Another advantage of industry and of refinements in the mechanical arts, is, that they commonly produce some refinements in the liberal; nor can the one be carried to perfection, without being accompanied, in some degree, with the other. The same age which produces great philosophers and politicians, renowned generals and poets, usually abounds with skilful weavers and ship-carpenters. We cannot reasonably expect, that a piece of woollen cloth will be wrought to perfection in a nation which is ignorant of astronomy, or where ethics are neglected. The spirit of the age affects all the arts; and the minds of men, being once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. Profound ignorance is totally banished, and men enjoy the privilege of rational creatures, to think as well as to act, to cultivate the pleasures of the mind as well as those of the body.

The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable do men become; nor is it possible, that, when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow-citizens in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations. They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in cloaths or furniture. Curiosity allures the wise; vanity the foolish; and pleasure both. Particular clubs and societies are every where formed: Both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner; and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace. So that, beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, 'tis impossible but they must feel an increase of humanity, from

the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment. Thus *industry*, *knowledge*, and *humanity*, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages.

Nor are these advantages attended with disadvantages which bear any proportion to them. The more men refine upon pleasure, the less will they indulge in excesses of any kind; because nothing is more destructive to true pleasure than such excesses. One may safely affirm, that the TARTARS are oftener guilty of beastly gluttony, when they feast on their dead horses, than EUROPEAN courtiers with all their refinements of cookery. And if libertine love, or even infidelity to the marriage-bed, be more frequent in polite ages, when it is often regarded only as a piece of gallantry; drunkenness, on the other hand, is much less common: A vice more odious, and more pernicious both to mind and body. And in this matter I would appeal, not only to an OVID or a PETRONIUS, but to a SENECA or a CATO. We know, that CÆSAR, during CATILINE's conspiracy, being necessitated to put into CATO's hands a *billet-doux*, which discovered an intrigue with SERVILIA, CATO's own sister, that stern philosopher threw it back to him with indignation; and, in the bitterness of his wrath, gave him the appellation of drunkard, as a term more opprobrious than that with which he could more justly have reproached him.

But industry, knowledge, and humanity, are not advantageous in private life alone: They diffuse their beneficial influence on the *public*, and render the government as great and flourishing

flourishing as they make individuals happy and prosperous. The increase and consumption of all the commodities which serve to the ornament and pleasure of life, are advantageous to society; because at the same time that they multiply those innocent gratifications to individuals, they are a kind of *storehouse* of labour, which, in the exigencies of state, may be turned to the public service. In a nation, where there is no demand for such superfluities, men sink into indolence, lose all the enjoyment of life, and are useless to the public, which cannot maintain nor support its fleets and armies, from the industry of such slothful members.

The bounds of all the EUROPEAN kingdoms are, at present, pretty near the same they were two hundred years ago: But what a difference is there in the power and grandeur of those kingdoms? Which can be ascribed to nothing but the increase of art and industry. When CHARLES VIII. of FRANCE invaded ITALY, he carried with him about 20,000 men: And yet this armament so exhausted the nation, as we learn from GUICCIARDIN, that for some years it was not able to make so great an effort. The late king of FRANCE, in time of war, kept in pay above 400,000 men\*; though from MAZARINE's death to his own, he was engaged in a course of wars that lasted near thirty years.

This industry is much promoted by the knowledge inseparable from the ages of art and refinement; as, on the other hand, this knowledge enables the public to make the best advantage of the industry of its subjects. Laws, order, police, discipline; these can never be carried to any degree of perfection, before human

\* The inscription on the PLACE-DE-VENDOME says 440,000.



reason has refined itself by exercise, and by an application to the more vulgar arts; at least, of commerce and manufactures. Can we expect, that a government will be well modelled by a people, who know not how to make a spinning-wheel, or to employ a loom to advantage? Not to mention, that all ignorant ages are infested with superstition, which throws the government off its bias, and disturbs men in the pursuit of their interest and happiness.

Knowledge in the arts of government naturally begets mildness and moderation, by instructing men in the advantages of humane maxims above rigour and severity, which drive subjects into rebellion, and render the return to submission impracticable, by cutting off all hopes of pardon. When the tempers of men are softened as well as their knowledge improved, this humanity appears still more conspicuous, and is the chief characteristic which distinguishes a civilized age from times of barbarity and ignorance. Factions are then less inveterate, revolutions less tragical, authority less severe, and seditions less frequent. Even foreign wars abate of their cruelty; and after the field of battle, where honour and interest steel men against compassion as well as fear, the combatants divest themselves of the brute, and resume the man.

Nor need we fear, that men, by losing their ferocity, will lose their martial spirit, or become less undaunted and vigorous in defence of their country or their liberty. The arts have no such effect in enervating either the mind or body. On the contrary, industry, their inseparable attendant, adds new force to both. And if anger, which is said to be the whetstone of courage, loses somewhat of its asperity, by politeness and refinement;

ment; a sense of honour, which is a stronger, more constant, and more governable principle, acquires fresh vigour by that elevation of genius, which arises from knowledge and a good education. Add to this, that courage can neither have any duration, nor be of any use, when not accompanied with discipline and martial skill, which are seldom found among a barbarous people. The ancients remarked, that DATAMES was the only barbarian that ever knew the art of war. And PYRRHUS seeing the ROMANS marshal their army with some art and skill, said with surprise, *These barbarians have nothing barbarous in their discipline!* 'Tis observable, that as the old ROMANS, by applying themselves solely to war, were the only uncivilized people that ever possessed military discipline; so the modern ITALIANS are the only civilized people, among EUROPEANS, that ever wanted courage and a martial spirit. Those who would ascribe this effeminacy of the ITALIANS to their luxury or politeness, or application to the arts, need but consider the FRENCH and ENGLISH, whose bravery is as uncontested, as their love for luxury, and their assiduity in commerce. The ITALIAN historians give us a more satisfactory reason for this degeneracy of their countrymen. They shew us how the sword was dropt at once by all the ITALIAN sovereigns; while the VENETIAN aristocracy was jealous of its subjects, the FLORENTINE democracy applied itself intirely to commerce; ROME was governed by priests, and NAPLES by women. War then became the business of foldiers of fortune, who spared one another, and, to the astonishment of the world, could engage a whole day in what they called a battle, and return at night to their camp, without the least bloodshed.

What

What has chiefly induced severe moralists to declaim against refinement in the arts, is the example of ancient Rome, which, joining to its poverty and rusticity, virtue and public spirit, rose to such a surprizing height of grandeur and liberty; but having learned from its conquered provinces the ASIATIC luxury, fell into every kind of corruption; whence arose sedition and civil wars, attended at last with the total loss of liberty. All the LATIN classics, whom we peruse in our infancy, are full of these sentiments, and universally ascribe the ruin of their state to the arts and riches imported from the East: Infomuch that SALLUST represents a taste for painting as a vice no less than lewdness and drinking. And so popular were these sentiments, during the latter ages of the republic, that this author abounds in praises of the old rigid ROMAN virtue, though himself the most egregious instance of modern luxury and corruption; speaks contemptuously of the GRECIAN eloquence, though the most elegant writer in the world; nay, employs preposterous digressions and declamations to this purpose, though a model of taste and correctness.

But it would be easy to prove, that these writers mistook the cause of the disorders in the ROMAN state, and ascribed to luxury and the arts, what really proceeded from an ill-modelled government, and the unlimited extent of conquests. Refinement on the pleasures and conveniencies of life has no natural tendency to beget venality and corruption. The value which all men put upon any particular pleasure, depends on comparison and experience; nor is a porter less greedy of money, which he spends on bacon and brandy, than a courtier, who purchases champagne and ortolans. Riches are valuable at all times,



times, and to all men, because they always purchase pleasures, such as men are accustomed to, and desire: Nor can any thing restrain or regulate the love of money, but a sense of honour and virtue; which, if it be not nearly equal at all times, will naturally abound most in ages of knowledge and refinement.

Of all EUROPEAN kingdoms, POLAND seems the most defective in the arts of war, as well as peace, mechanical as well as liberal; and yet 'tis there that venality and corruption do most prevail. The nobles seem to have preserved their crown elective for no other purpose, but regularly to sell it to the highest bidder. This is almost the only species of commerce with which that people are acquainted.

The liberties of ENGLAND, so far from decaying since the improvements in the arts, have never flourished so much as during that period. And though corruption may seem to increase of late years; this is chiefly to be ascribed to our established liberty, when our princes have found the impossibility of governing without parliaments, or of terrifying parliaments by the phantom of prerogative. Not to mention, that this corruption or venality prevails infinitely more among the electors than the elected; and therefore cannot justly be ascribed to any refinements in luxury.

If we consider the matter in a proper light, we shall find, that improvements in the arts are rather favourable to liberty, and have a natural tendency to preserve, if not produce a free government. In rude unpolished nations, where the arts are neglected, all the labour is bestowed on the cultivation of the ground; and the whole society is divided into two classes, proprietors of land, and their vassals or tenants. The latter are

necessarily dependent, and fitted for slavery and subjection; especially where they possess no riches, and are not valued for their knowledge in agriculture; as must always be the case where the arts are neglected. The former naturally erect themselves into petty tyrants; and must either submit to an absolute master for the sake of peace and order; or if they will preserve their independency, like the ancient barons, they must fall into feuds and contests among themselves, and throw the whole society into such confusion, as is perhaps worse than the most despotic government. But where luxury nourishes commerce and industry, the peasants, by a proper cultivation of the land, become rich and independent; while the tradesmen and merchants acquire a share of the property, and draw authority and consideration to that middling rank of men, who are the best and firmest basis of public liberty. These submit not to slavery, like the poor peasants, from poverty and meanness of spirit; and having no hopes of tyrannizing over others, like the barons, they are not tempted, for the sake of that gratification, to submit to the tyranny of their sovereign. They covet equal laws, which may secure their property, and preserve them from monarchical, as well as aristocratical tyranny.

The house of commons is the support of our popular government; and all the world acknowledge, that it owed its chief influence and consideration to the increase of commerce, which threw such a balance of property into the hands of the commons. How inconsistent then is it to blame so violently a refinement in the arts, and to represent it as the bane of liberty and public spirit!

To declaim against present times, and magnify the virtue of remote ancestors, is a propensity almost inherent in human nature.

ture: and as the sentiments and opinions of civilized ages alone are transmitted to posterity, hence it is that we meet with so many severe judgments pronounced against luxury, and even science; and hence it is that at present we give so ready an assent to them. But the fallacy is easily perceived from comparing different nations that are contemporaries; where we both judge more impartially and can better set in opposition those manners with which we are sufficiently acquainted. Treachery and cruelty, the most pernicious and most odious of all vices, seem peculiar to uncivilized ages; and by the refined GREEKS and ROMANS were ascribed to all the barbarous nations, which surrounded them. They might justly, therefore, have presumed, that their own ancestors, so highly celebrated, possessed no greater virtue, and were as much inferior to their posterity in honour and humanity, as in taste and science. An ancient FRANK or SAXON may be highly extolled: But I believe every man would think his life or fortune much less secure in the hands of a MOOR or TARTAR, than in those of a FRENCH or ENGLISH gentleman, the rank of men the most civilized in the most civilized nations.

We come now to the *second* position which we proposed to illustrate, *viz.* that as innocent luxury, or a refinement in the arts and conveniencies of life, is advantageous to the public; so wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree farther, begins to be a quality pernicious, though, perhaps, not the most pernicious, to political society.

Let us consider what we call vicious luxury. No gratification, however sensual, can of itself be esteemed vicious. A



gratification is only vicious, when it engrosses all a man's expence, and leaves no ability for such acts of duty and generosity as are required by his situation and fortune. Suppose, that he correct the vice, and employ part of his expence in the education of his children, in the support of his friends, and in relieving the poor; would any prejudice result to society? On the contrary, the same consumption would arise; and that labour, which, at present, is employed only in producing a slender gratification to one man, would relieve the necessitous, and bestow satisfaction on hundreds. The same care and toil which raise a dish of peas at CHRISTMAS, would give bread to a whole family during six months. To say, that, without a vicious luxury, the labour would not have been employed at all, is only to say, that there is some other defect in human nature, such as indolence, selfishness, inattention to others, for which luxury in some measure provides a remedy; as one poison may be an antidote to another. But virtue, like wholesome food, is better than poisons, however corrected.

Suppose the same number of men that are at present in BRITAIN, with the same soil and climate; I ask, is it not possible for them to be happier, by the most perfect way of life which can be imagined, and by the greatest reformation which Omnipotence itself could work in their temper and disposition? To assert that they cannot, appears evidently ridiculous. As the land is able to maintain more than all its inhabitants, they could never, in such an UTOPIAN state, feel any other ills than those which arise from bodily sickness; and these are not the half of human miseries. All other ills spring from some vice, either in ourselves or others; and even many of our diseases proceed from the same origin. Remove the vices, and the ills follow.

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You must only take care to remove all the vices. If you remove part, you may render the matter worse. By banishing *vicious* luxury, without curing sloth and an indifference to others, you only diminish industry in the state, and add nothing to mens charity or their generosity. Let us, therefore, rest contented with asserting, that two opposite vices in a state may be more advantageous than either of them alone; but let us never pronounce vice in itself advantageous. Is it not very inconsistent for an author to assert in one page, that moral distinctions are inventions of politicians for public interest; and in the next page maintain, that vice is advantageous to the public\*? And indeed it seems, upon any system of morality, little less than a contradiction in terms, to talk of a vice which is in general beneficial to society.

Prodigality is not to be confounded with a refinement in the arts. It even appears, that that vice is much less frequent in the cultivated ages. Industry and gain beget this frugality, among the lower and middle ranks of men; and in all the busy professions. Men of high rank, indeed, it may be pretended, are more allured by the pleasures, which become more frequent. But idleness is the great source of prodigality at all times; and there are pleasures and vanities in every age, which allure men equally when they are unacquainted with better enjoyments. Not to mention, that the high interest, payed in rude times, quickly consumes the fortunes of the landed gentry, and multiplies their necessities.

I thought this reasoning necessary, in order to give some light to a philosophical question, which has been much disputed in

\* Fable of the Bees.

BRITAIN. I call it a *philosophical* question, not a *political* one. For whatever may be the consequence of such a miraculous transformation of mankind, as would endow them with every species of virtue, and free them from every species of vice; this concerns not the magistrate, who aims only at possibilities. He cannot cure every vice, by substituting a virtue in its place. Very often he can only cure one vice by another; and in that case, he ought to prefer what is least pernicious to society. Luxury, when excessive, is the source of many ills; but is in general preferable to sloth and idleness, which would commonly succeed in its place, and are more pernicious both to private persons and to the public. When sloth reigns, a mean uncultivated way of life prevails amongst individuals, without society, without enjoyment. And if the sovereign, in such a situation, demands the service of his subjects, the labour of the state suffices only to furnish the necessaries of life to the labourers, and can afford nothing to those who are employed in the public service.



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## ESSAY III.

### OF MONEY.

**M**ONEY is not, properly speaking, one of the subjects of commerce; but only the instrument which men have agreed upon to facilitate the exchange of one commodity for another. 'Tis none of the wheels of trade: 'Tis the oil which renders the motion of the wheels more smooth and easy. If we consider any one kingdom by itself, 'tis evident, that the greater or less plenty of money is of no consequence; since the prices of commodities are always proportioned to the plenty of money, and a crown in HENRY VII's time served the same purpose as a pound does at present. 'Tis only the *public* which draws any advantage from the greater plenty of money; and that only in its wars and negotiations with foreign states. And this is the reason, why all rich and trading countries, from CARTHAGE to BRITAIN and HOLLAND, have employed mercenary troops, which they hired from their poorer neighbours. Were they to make use of their native subjects, they would find less advantage from their superior riches, and from their great plenty of gold and silver; since the pay of all their servants must rise in proportion to the public opulence. Our small army in BRITAIN of 20,000 men are maintained at as great expence as a FRENCH army thrice as numerous.

The

The ENGLISH fleet, during the late war, required as much money to support it as all the ROMAN legions, which kept the whole world in subjection, during the time of the emperors\*.

The greater number of people and their greater industry are serviceable in all cases; at home and abroad, in private and in public. But the greater plenty of money, is very limited in its use, and may even sometimes be a loss to a nation in its commerce with foreigners.

There seems to be a happy concurrence of causes in human affairs, which checks the growth of trade and riches, and hinders them from being confined entirely to one people; as might naturally at first be dreaded from the advantages of an established commerce. Where one nation has got the start of another in trade, 'tis very difficult for the latter to regain the

\* A private foldier in the ROMAN infantry had a denarius a-day, somewhat less than eight-pence. The ROMAN emperors had commonly 25 legions in pay, which, allowing 5000 men to a legion, makes 125,000. TACIT. *Ann. lib. 4.* 'Tis true, there were also auxiliaries to the legions; but their numbers are uncertain, as well as their pay. To consider only the legionaries, the pay of the private men could not exceed 1,600,000 pounds. Now, the parliament in the last war commonly allowed for the fleet 2,500,000. We have therefore 900,000 over for the officers and other expences of the ROMAN legions. There seem to have been but few officers in the ROMAN armies, in comparison of what are employed in all our modern troops, except some SWISS corps. And these officers had very small pay: A centurion, for instance, only double a common foldier. And as the foldiers from their pay (TACIT. *Ann. lib. 1.*) bought their own cloaths, arms, tents, and baggage; this must also diminish considerably the other charges of the army. So little expensive was that mighty government, and so easy was its yoke over the world. And, indeed, this is the more natural conclusion from the foregoing calculations. For money, after the conquest of ÆGYPT, seems to have been nearly in as great plenty at ROME, as it is at present in the richest of the EUROPEAN kingdoms.

ground it has lost ; because of the superior industry and skill of the former, and the greater stocks, of which its merchants are possessed, and which enable them to trade for so much smaller profits. But these advantages are compensated, in some measure, by the low price of labour in every nation which has not an extensive commerce, and does not very much abound in gold and silver. Manufactures, therefore, gradually shift their places, leaving those countries and provinces which they have already enriched, and flying to others, whither they are allured by the cheapness of provisions and labour ; till they have enriched these also, and are again banished by the same causes. And, in general, we may observe, that the dearth of every thing, from plenty of money, is a disadvantage, which attends an established commerce, and sets bounds to it in every country, by enabling the poorer states to undersell the richer in all foreign markets.

This has made me entertain a great doubt concerning the benefit of *banks* and *paper-credit*, which are so generally esteemed advantageous to every nation. That provisions and labour should become dear by the increase of trade and money, is, in many respects, an inconvenience ; but an inconvenience that is unavoidable, and the effect of that public wealth and prosperity which are the end of all our wishes. 'Tis compensated by the advantages which we reap from the possession of these precious metals, and the weight which they give the nation in all foreign wars and negotiations. But there appears no reason for increasing that inconvenience by a counterfeit money, which foreigners will not accept in any payment, and which any great disorder in the state will reduce to nothing.

There



There are, 'tis true, many people in every rich state, who, having large sums of money, would prefer paper with good security; as being of more easy transport and more safe custody. If the public provide not a bank, private bankers will take advantage of this circumstance; as the goldsmiths formerly did in LONDON, or the bankers do at present in DUBLIN: And therefore 'tis better, it may be thought, that a public company should enjoy the benefit of that paper-credit, which always will have place in every opulent kingdom. But to endeavour artificially to increase such a credit, can never be the interest of any trading nation; but must lay them under disadvantages, by increasing money beyond its natural proportion to labour and commodities, and thereby heightening their price to the merchant and manufacturer. And in this view, it must be allowed, that no bank could be more advantageous, than such a one as locked up all the money it received†, and never augmented the circulating coin, as is usual, by returning part of its treasure into commerce. A public bank, by this expedient, might cut off much of the dealings of private bankers and money-jobbers; and though the state bore the charge of salaries to the directors and tellers of this bank, (for, according to the preceding supposition, it would have no profit from its dealings), the national advantage, resulting from the low price of labour and the destruction of paper-credit, would be a sufficient compensation. Not to mention, that so large a sum, lying ready at command, would be a great convenience in times of public danger and distress; and what part of it was used might be replaced at leisure, when peace and tranquillity were restored to the nation.

† This is the case with the bank of AMSTERDAM.

But of this subject of paper-credit we shall treat more largely hereafter. And I shall finish this essay on money, by proposing and explaining two observations, which may, perhaps, serve to employ the thoughts of our speculative politicians. For to these only I all along address myself. 'Tis enough that I submit to the ridicule sometimes, in this age, attached to the character of a philosopher, without adding to it that which belongs to a projector.

It was a shrewd observation of ANACHARSIS† the SCYTHIAN, who had never seen money in his own country, that gold and silver seemed to him of no use to the GREEKS, but to assist them in numeration and arithmetic. 'Tis indeed evident, that money is nothing but the representation of labour and commodities, and serves only as a method of rating or estimating them. Where coin is in greater plenty; as a greater quantity of it is required to represent the same quantity of goods; it can have no effect, either good or bad, taking a nation within itself; no more than it would make any alteration on a merchant's books, if, instead of the ARABIAN method of notation, which requires few characters, he should make use of the ROMAN, which requires a great many. Nay, the greater quantity of money, like the ROMAN characters, is rather inconvenient, and requires greater trouble both to keep and transport it. But notwithstanding this conclusion, which must be allowed just, 'tis certain, that since the discovery of the mines in AMERICA, industry has increased in all the nations of EUROPE, except in the possessors of those mines; and this may justly be ascribed, amongst other reasons, to the increase of

† PLUT. *Quomodo quis suos profectus in virtute sentire possit.*

gold and silver. Accordingly we find, that in every kingdom into which money begins to flow in greater abundance than formerly, every thing takes a new face; labour and industry gain life; the merchant becomes more enterprising, the manufacturer more diligent and skilful, and even the farmer follows his plough with greater alacrity and attention. This is not easily to be accounted for, if we consider only the influence which a greater abundance of coin has in the kingdom itself, by heightening the price of commodities, and obliging every one to pay a greater number of these little yellow or white pieces for every thing he purchases. And as to foreign trade, it appears, that great plenty of money is rather disadvantageous, by raising the price of every kind of labour.

To account, then, for this phenomenon, we must consider, that though the high price of commodities be a necessary consequence of the increase of gold and silver, yet it follows not immediately upon that increase; but some time is required before the money circulate through the whole state, and make its effects be felt on all ranks of people. At first, no alteration is perceived; by degrees, the price rises, first of one commodity, then of another; till the whole at last reaches a just proportion with the new quantity of specie which is in the kingdom. In my opinion, 'tis only in this interval or intermediate situation, between the acquisition of money and rise of prices, that the increasing quantity of gold and silver is favourable to industry. When any quantity of money is imported into a nation, it is not at first dispersed into many hands; but is confined to the coffers of a few persons, who immediately seek to employ it to the best advantage. Here are a set of manufacturers



turers or merchants, we shall suppose, who have received returns of gold and silver for goods which they sent to CADIZ. They are thereby enabled to employ more workmen than formerly, who never dream of demanding higher wages, but are glad of employment from such good pay-masters. If workmen become scarce, the manufacturer gives higher wages, but at first requires an increase of labour; and this is willingly submitted to by the artizan, who can now eat and drink better, to compensate his additional toil and fatigue. He carries his money to market, where he finds every thing at the same price as formerly, but returns with greater quantity and of better kinds, for the use of his family. The farmer and gardener, finding, that all their commodities are taken off, apply themselves with alacrity to the raising more; and at the same time can afford to take better and more cloths from their tradesmen, whose price is the same as formerly, and their industry only whetted by so much new gain. 'Tis easy to trace the money in its progress through the whole commonwealth; where we shall find, that it must first quicken the diligence of every individual, before it increase the price of labour.

And that the specie may increase to a considerable pitch, before it have this latter effect, appears, amongst other instances, from the frequent operations of the FRENCH king on the money; where it was always found, that the augmenting the numerary value did not produce a proportional rise of the prices, at least for some time. In the last year of LOUIS XIV. money was raised three sevenths, but prices augmented only one. Corn in FRANCE is now sold at the same price, or for the same number of livres it was in 1683; though silver was

then at 30 livres the mark, and is now at 50 \*. Not to mention the great addition of gold and silver, which may have come into that kingdom since the former period.

From the whole of this reasoning we may conclude, that 'tis of no manner of consequence, with regard to the domestic happiness of a state, whether money be in a greater or less quantity. The good policy of the magistrate consists only in keeping it, if possible, still increasing; because, by that means, he keeps alive a spirit of industry in the nation, and increases the stock of labour, in which consists all real power and riches. A nation whose money decreases, is actually, at that time, much weaker and more miserable than another nation, which possesses no more money, but is on the increasing hand. This will be easily accounted for, if we consider, that the alterations

\* These facts I give upon the authority of Mons. du Tor in his *Reflexions politiques*, an author of reputation. Though I must confess, that the facts which he advances on other occasions, are often so suspicious, as to make his authority less in this matter. However, the general observation, that the augmenting the money in FRANCE does not at first proportionably augment the prices, is certainly just.

By the by, this seems to be one of the best reasons which can be given, for a gradual and universal augmentation of the money, though it has been intirely overlooked in all those volumes which have been wrote on that question by MELON, du Tor, and PARIS de VERNEY. Were all our money, for instance, recoined, and a penny's worth of silver taken from every shilling, the new shilling would probably purchase every thing that could have been bought by the old; the prices of every thing would thereby be insensibly diminished; foreign trade enlivened; and domestic industry, by the circulation of a greater number of pounds and shillings, would receive some increase and encouragement. In executing such a project, 'twould be better to make the new shilling pass for 24 half-pence, in order to preserve the illusion, and make it be taken for the same. And as a recoinage of our silver begins to be requisite, by the continual wearing of our shillings and sixpences, it may be doubtful, whether we ought to imitate the example in King WILLIAM's reign, when the clipt money was raised to the old standard.

in the quantity of money, either on the one side or the other, are not immediately attended with proportionable alterations in the prices of commodities. There is always an interval before matters be adjusted to their new situation; and this interval is as pernicious to industry when gold and silver are diminishing, as it is advantageous when these metals are increasing. The workman has not the same employment from the manufacturer and merchant; though he pays the same price for every thing in the market. The farmer cannot dispose of his corn and cattle; though he must pay the same rent to his landlord. The poverty, and beggary, and sloth, which must ensue, are easily foreseen.

II. The second observation which I proposed to make with regard to money, may be explained after the following manner. There are some kingdoms, and many provinces in EUROPE, (and all of them were once in the same condition) where money is so scarce, that the landlord can get none at all from his tenants; but is obliged to take his rent in kind, and either to consume it himself, or transport it to places where he may find a market. In those countries, the prince can levy few or no taxes, but in the same manner: And as he will receive very small benefit from impositions so paid, 'tis evident that such a kingdom has very little force even at home; and cannot maintain fleets and armies to the same extent, as if every part of it abounded in gold and silver. There is surely a greater disproportion betwixt the force of GERMANY at present and what it was three centuries ago†, than there is in its industry,

† The ITALIANS gave to the Emperor MAXIMILIAN, the nick-name of POCHI-DANARI. None of the enterprises of that prince ever succeeded, for want of money.

people,



people, and manufactures. The AUSTRIAN dominions in the empire are in general well peopled and well cultivated, and are of great extent; but have not a proportionable weight in the balance of EUROPE; proceeding, as is commonly supposed, from the scarcity of money. How do all these facts agree with that principle of reason, that the quantity of gold and silver is in itself altogether indifferent? According to that principle, where ever a sovereign has numbers of subjects, and these have plenty of commodities, he should of course be great and powerful, and they rich and happy, independent of the greater or lesser abundance of the precious metals. These admit of divisions and subdivisions to a great extent; and where they would become so small as to be in danger of being lost, 'tis easy to mix them with a baser metal, as is practised in some countries of EUROPE; and by that means raise them to a bulk more sensible and convenient. They still serve the same purposes of exchange, whatever their number may be, or whatever colour they may be supposed to have.

To these difficulties I answer, that the effect here supposed to flow from scarcity of money, really arises from the manners and customs of the inhabitants; and that we mistake, as is too usual, a collateral effect for a cause. The contradiction is only apparent; but it requires some thought and reflection to discover the principles by which we can reconcile *reason* to *experience*.

It seems a maxim almost self-evident, that the prices of every thing depend on the proportion between commodities and money, and that any considerable alteration on either of these has the same effect, either of heightening or lowering the prices.

prices. Increase the commodities, they become cheaper; increase the money, they rise in their value. As, on the other hand, a diminution of the former, and that of the latter, have contrary tendencies.

'Tis also evident that the prices do not so much depend on the absolute quantity of commodities and that of money, which are in a nation, as in that of the commodities, which come or may come to market, and of the money which circulates. If the coin be locked up in chests, 'tis the same thing with regard to prices, as if it were annihilated: If the commodities be hoarded in granaries, a like effect follows. As the money and commodities, in these cases, never meet, they cannot affect each other. Were we, at any time, to form conjectures concerning the price of provisions, the corn which the farmer must reserve for the maintenance of himself and family, ought never to enter into the estimation. 'Tis only the overplus, compared to the demand, that determines the value.

To apply these principles, we must consider, that in the first and more uncultivated ages of any state, ere fancy has confounded her wants with those of nature, men, contented with the productions of their own fields, or with those rude preparations which they themselves can work upon them, have little occasion for exchange, or at least for money, which, by agreement, is the common measure of exchange. The wool of the farmer's own flock, spun in his own family, and wrought by a neighbouring weaver, who receives his payment in corn or wool, suffices for furniture and cloathing. The carpenter, the smith, the mason, the tailor, are retained by wages of a like nature; and the landlord himself, dwelling in the neighbour-  
hood;

hood, is contented to receive his rent in the commodities raised by the farmer. The greatest part of these he consumes at home, in rustic hospitality: The rest, perhaps, he disposes of for money to the neighbouring town, whence he draws the few materials of his expence and luxury.

But after men begin to refine on all these enjoyments, and live not always at home, nor are contented with what can be raised in their neighbourhood, there is more exchange and commerce of all kinds, and more money enters into that exchange. The tradesmen will not be paid in corn; because they want something more than barely to eat. The farmer goes beyond his own parish for the commodities he purchases, and cannot always carry his commodities to the merchant who supplies him. The landlord lives in the capital, or in a foreign country; and demands his rent in gold and silver, which can easily be transported to him. Great undertakers, and manufacturers, and merchants, arise in every commodity; and these can conveniently deal in nothing but in specie. And consequently, in this situation of society, the coin enters into many more contracts, and by that means is much more employed than in the former.

The necessary effect is, that provided the money does not increase in the nation, every thing must become much cheaper in times of industry and refinement, than in rude, uncultivated ages. 'Tis the proportion between the circulating money, and the commodities in the market, which determines the prices. Goods that are consumed at home, or exchanged with other goods in the neighbourhood, never come to market; they affect not in the least the current specie; with regard to it they



are as if totally annihilated; and consequently this method of using them sinks the proportion on the side of the commodities, and increases the prices. But after money enters into all contracts and sales, and is every where the measure of exchange, the same national cash has a much greater task to perform; all commodities are then in the market; the sphere of circulation is enlarged; 'tis the same case as if that individual sum were to serve a larger kingdom; and therefore, the proportion being here lessened on the side of the money, every thing must become cheaper, and the prices gradually fall.

By the most exact computations that have been formed all over EUROPE, after making allowance for the alteration in the numerary value or the denomination, 'tis found, that the prices of all things have only risen three, or at most, four times, since the discovery of the WEST INDIES. But will any one assert, that there is not much more than four times the coin in EUROPE, that was in the fifteenth century, and the centuries preceding it? The SPANIARDS and PORTUGUESE from their mines, the ENGLISH, FRENCH, and DUTCH, by their AFRICAN trade, and by their interlopers in the WEST INDIES, bring home about six millions a-year, of which not above a third part goes to the EAST INDIES. This sum alone in ten years would probably double the ancient stock of money in EUROPE. And no other satisfactory reason can be given, why all prices have not risen to a much more exorbitant height, except that derived from a change of customs and manners. Besides that more commodities are produced by additional industry, the same commodities come more to market, after men depart from their ancient simplicity of manners. And though this increase has not been equal to that of money, it has, however,

ever, been considerable, and has preserved the proportion between coin and commodities nearer the ancient standard.

Were the question proposed, Which of these methods of living in the people, the simple or refined, is the most advantageous to the state or public? I should, without much scruple, prefer the latter, in a view to politics at least; and should produce this as an additional reason for the encouragement of trade and manufactures.

When men live in the ancient simple manner, and supply all their necessities from domestic industry or from the neighbourhood, the sovereign can levy no taxes in money from a considerable part of his subjects; and if he will impose on them any burdens, he must take his payment in commodities, with which alone they abound; a method attended with such great and obvious inconveniencies, that they need not here be insisted on. All the money he can pretend to raise, must be from his principal cities, where alone it circulates; and these, 'tis evident, cannot afford him so much as the whole state could, did gold and silver circulate through the whole. But besides this obvious diminution of the revenue, there is also another cause of the poverty of the public in such a situation. Not only the sovereign receives less money, but the same money goes not so far as in times of industry and general commerce. Every thing is dearer, where the gold and silver are supposed equal; and that because fewer commodities come to market, and the whole coin bears a higher proportion to what is to be purchased by it; whence alone the prices of every thing are fixed and determined.

Here

Here then we may learn the fallacy of the remark, often to be met with in historians, and even in common conversation, that any particular state is weak, though fertile, populous, and well cultivated, merely because it wants money. It appears, that the want of money can never injure any state within itself: For men and commodities are the real strength of any community. 'Tis the siple manner of living which here hurts the public, by confining the gold and silver to few hands, and preventing its universal diffusion and circulation. On the contrary, industry and refinements of all kinds incorporate it with the whole state, however small its quantity may be: They digest it into every vein, so to speak; and make it enter into every transaction and contract. No hand is entirely empty of it. And as the prices of every thing fall by that means, the sovereign has a double advantage: He may draw money by his taxes from every part of the state; and what he receives, goes farther in every purchase and payment.

We may infer, from a comparison of prices, that money is not more plentiful in CHINA, than it was in EUROPE three centuries ago: But what immense power is that empire possessed of, if we may judge by the civil and military list maintained by it? POLYBIUS \* tells us, that provisions were so cheap in ITALY during his time, that in some places the stated club at the inns was a *semis* a-head, little more than a farthing! Yet the ROMAN power had even then subdued the whole known world. About a century before that period, the CARTHAGINIAN ambassador said, by way of raillery, that no people lived more sociably amongst themselves than the ROMANS; for that in every entertainment, which, as foreign

\* Lib. 2. cap. 15.



ministers, they received, they still observed the same plate at every table†. The absolute quantity of the precious metals is a matter of great indifference. There are only two circumstances of any importance, viz. their gradual increase, and their thorough concoction and circulation through the state; and the influence of both these circumstances has been here explained.

In the following Essay we shall see an instance of a like fallacy as that above mentioned; where a collateral effect is taken for a cause, and where a consequence is ascribed to the plenty of money; though it be really owing to a change in the manners and customs of the people.

† PLIN. lib. 33. cap. 11.

## E S S A Y IV.

## OF INTEREST.

**N**OTHING is esteemed a more certain sign of the flourishing condition of any nation than the lowness of interest: And with reason; though I believe the cause is somewhat different from what is commonly apprehended. The lowness of interest is generally ascribed to the plenty of money. But money, however plentiful, has no other effect, *if fixed*, than to raise the price of labour. Silver is more common than gold; and therefore you receive a greater quantity of it for the same commodities. But do you pay less interest for it? Interest in BATAVIA and JAMAICA is at 10 *per cent.* in PORTUGAL at 6; though these places, as we may learn from the prices of every thing, abound much more in gold and silver than either LONDON or AMSTERDAM.

Were all the gold in ENGLAND annihilated at once, and one and twenty shillings substituted in the place of every guinea, would money be more plentiful or interest lower? No surely: We should only use silver instead of gold. Were gold rendered as common as silver, and silver as common as copper; would money be more plentiful or interest lower? We may assuredly give the same answer. Our shillings would then be yellow, and our halfpence white; and we should have no guineas. No

other difference would ever be observed; no alteration on commerce, manufactures, navigation, or interest; unless we imagine, that the colour of the metal is of any consequence.

Now, what is so visible in these greater variations of scarcity or abundance of the precious metals, must hold in all inferior changes. If the multiplying gold and silver fifteen times makes no difference, much less can the doubling or tripling them. All augmentation has no other effect than to heighten the price of labour and commodities; and even this variation is little more than that of a name. In the progress towards these changes, the augmentation may have some influence, by exciting industry; but after the prices are settled, suitable to the new abundance of gold and silver, it has no manner of influence.

An effect always holds proportion with its cause. Prices have risen about four times since the discovery of the *INDIES*; and 'tis probable gold and silver have multiplied much more: But interest has not fallen much above a half. The rate of interest, therefore, is not derived from the quantity of the precious metals.

Money having merely a fictitious value, arising from the agreement and convention of men, the greater or less plenty of it is of no consequence, if we consider a nation within itself; and the quantity of specie, when once fixed, though never so large, has no other effect, than to oblige every one to tell out a greater number of those shining bits of metal, for cloaths, furniture, or equipage, without increasing any one convenience of life. If a man borrows money to build a house, he then carries home a greater load; because the stone, timber, lead,



lead, glass, &c. with the labour of the masons and carpenters, are represented by a greater quantity of gold and silver. But as these metals are considered merely as representations, there can no alteration arise, from their bulk or quantity, their weight or colour, either upon their real value or their interest. The same interest, in all cases, bears the same proportion to the sum. And if you lent me so much labour and so many commodities; by receiving five *per cent.* you receive always proportional labour and commodities, however represented, whether by yellow or white coin, whether by a pound or an ounce. 'Tis in vain, therefore, to look for the cause of the fall or rise of interest in the greater or less quantity of gold and silver which is fixed in any nation.

High interest arises from *three* circumstances: A great demand for borrowing; little riches to supply that demand; and great profits arising from commerce. And these circumstances are a clear proof of the small advance of commerce and industry, not of the scarcity of gold and silver. Low interest, on the other hand, proceeds from the three opposite circumstances: A small demand for borrowing; great riches to supply that demand; and small profits arising from commerce. And these circumstances are all connected together, and proceed from the increase of industry and commerce, not of gold and silver. We shall endeavour to prove these points as fully and distinctly as possible; and shall begin with the causes and the effects of a great or small demand for borrowing.

When the people have emerged ever so little from a savage state, and their numbers have increased beyond the original  
mul-

multitude, there must immediately arise an inequality of property; and while some possess large tracts of land, others are confined within narrow limits, and some are entirely without any landed property. Those who possess more land than they can labour, employ those who possess none, and agree to receive a determinate part of the product. Thus the *landed interest* is immediately established; nor is there any settled government, however rude, in which affairs are not on this footing. Of these proprietors of land, some must presently discover themselves to be of different tempers from others; and while one would willingly store up the product of his land for futurity, another desires to consume at present what should suffice for many years. But as the spending a settled revenue is a way of life entirely without occupation; men have so much need of somewhat to fix and engage them, that pleasures, such as they are, will be the pursuit of the greatest part of the landholders, and the prodigals amongst them will always be more numerous than the misers. In a state, therefore, where there is nothing but a landed interest, as there is little frugality, the borrowers must be very numerous, and the rate of interest must hold proportion to it. The difference depends not on the quantity of money, but on the habits and manners which prevail. By this alone the demand for borrowing is increased or diminished. Were money so plentiful as to make an egg be sold for sixpence; so long as there are only landed gentry and peasants in the state, the borrowers must be numerous, and interest high. The rent for the same farm would be heavier and more bulky: But the same idleness of the landlord, with the higher prices of commodities, would dissipate it in the same time, and produce the same necessity and demand for borrowing.

Nor is the case different with regard to the *second* circumstance which we proposed to consider, *viz.* the great or little riches to supply this demand. This effect also depends on the habits and ways of living of the people, not on the quantity of gold and silver. In order to have in any state, a great number of lenders, 'tis not sufficient nor requisite that there be great abundance of the precious metals. 'Tis only requisite that the property or command of that quantity, which is in the state, whether great or small, should be collected in particular hands, so as to form considerable sums, or compose a great monied interest. This begets a number of lenders, and sinks the rate of usury; and this, I shall venture to affirm, depends not on the quantity of specie, but on particular manners and customs, which make the specie gather into separate sums or masses of considerable value.

For suppose, that, by miracle, every man in BRITAIN should have five pounds flipt into his pocket in one night; this would much more than double the whole money that is at present in the kingdom; and yet there would not next day, nor for some time, be any more lenders, nor any variation on the interest. And were there nothing but landlords and peasants in the state, this money, however abundant, could never gather into sums; and would only serve to increase the prices of every thing, without any farther consequence. The prodigal landlord dissipates it as fast as he receives it; and the beggarly peasant has no means, nor view, nor ambition of obtaining above a bare livelihood. The overplus of borrowers above that of lenders, continuing still the same, there will follow no reduction of interest. That depends upon another principle; and must proceed

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ceed from an increase of industry and frugality, of arts and commerce.

Every thing useful to the life of man arises from the ground; but few things arise in that condition which is requisite to render them useful. There must, therefore, beside the peasants, and the proprietors of land, be another rank of men, who, receiving from the former the rude materials, work them into their proper form, and retain part for their own use and subsistence. In the infancy of society, these contracts betwixt the artificers and the peasants, and betwixt one species of artificers and another, are commonly entered into immediately by the persons themselves, who, being neighbours, are easily acquainted with each other's necessities, and can lend their mutual assistance to supply them. But when men's industry increases, and their views enlarge, 'tis found, that the most remote parts of the state can assist each other as well as the more contiguous, and that this intercourse of good offices may be carried on to the greatest extent and intricacy. Hence the origin of *merchants*, the most useful race of men in the whole society, who serve as agents between those parts of the state, that are wholly unacquainted, and are ignorant of each other's necessities. Here are in a city fifty workmen in silk and linen, and a thousand customers; and these two ranks of men, so necessary to each other, can never rightly meet, till one man erects a shop, to which all the workmen and all the customers repair. In this province, grass rises in abundance: The inhabitants abound in cheese, and butter, and cattle; but want bread and corn, which, in a neighbouring province, are in too great abundance for the use of the inhabitants. One man discovers this. He brings corn from the one province, and re-

turns

turns with cattle; and supplying the wants of both, he is, so far, a common benefactor. As the people increase in numbers and industry, the difficulty of their intercourse increases: The business of the agency or merchandize becomes more intricate; and divides, subdivides, compounds, and mixes to a greater variety. In all these transactions, 'tis necessary, and reasonable, that a considerable part of the commodities and labour should belong to the merchant, to whom, in a great measure, they are owing. And these commodities he will sometimes preserve in kind, or more commonly convert into money, which is their common representation. If gold and silver have increased in the state together with the industry, it will require a great quantity of these metals to represent a great quantity of commodities and labour. If industry alone has increased, the prices of every thing must sink, and a very small quantity of specie will serve as a representation.

There is no craving or demand of the human mind more constant and insatiable than that for exercise and employment; and this desire seems the foundation of most of our passions and pursuits. Deprive a man of all business and serious occupation, he runs restless from one amusement to another; and the weight and oppression which he feels from idleness, is so great, that he forgets the ruin which must follow from his immoderate expences. Give him a more harmless way of employing his mind or body, he is satisfied, and feels no longer that insatiable thirst after pleasure. But if the employment you give him be profitable, especially if the profit be attached to every particular exertion of industry, he has gain so often in his eye, that he acquires, by degrees, a passion for it, and knows no such pleasure as that of seeing the daily increase of his fortune. And

this is the reason why trade increases frugality, and why, among merchants, there is the same overplus of misers above prodigals, as, among the possessors of land, there is the contrary.

Commerce increases industry, by conveying it readily from one member of the state to another, and allowing none of it to perish or become useless. It increases frugality, by giving occupation to men, and employing them in the arts of gain, which soon engage their affection, and remove all relish for pleasure and expence. 'Tis an infallible consequence of all industrious professions, to beget frugality, and make the love of gain prevail over the love of pleasure. Among lawyers and physicians who have any practice, there are many more who live within their income, than who exceed it, or even live up to it. But lawyers and physicians beget no industry; and 'tis even at the expence of others they acquire their riches; so that they are sure to diminish the possessions of some of their fellow-citizens as fast as they increase their own. Merchants, on the contrary, beget industry, by serving as canals to convey it through every corner of the state; and at the same time by their frugality, they acquire great power over that industry, and collect a large property in the labour and commodities, which they are the chief instruments in producing. There is no other profession, therefore, except merchandize, which can make the monied interest considerable, or, in other words, can increase industry, and, by also increasing frugality, give a great command of that industry to particular members of the society. Without commerce, the state must consist chiefly of landed gentry, whose prodigality and expence make a continual demand for borrowing; and of peasants, who have no sums to supply that demand.

The



The money never gathers into large stocks or fums, which can be lent at interest. It is dispersed into numberless hands, who either squander it in idle show and magnificence, or employ it in the purchase of the common necessaries of life. Commerce alone assembles it into considerable fums; and this effect it has merely from the industry which it begets, and the frugality which it inspires, independent of that particular quantity of precious metal which may circulate in the state.

Thus an increase of commerce, by a necessary consequence, raises a great number of lenders, and by that means produces a lowness of interest. We must now consider how far this increase of commerce diminishes the profits arising from that profession, and gives rise to the *third* circumstance requisite to produce a lowness of interest.

It may be proper to observe on this head, that low interest and low profits of merchandize are two events, that mutually forward each other, and are both originally derived from that extensive commerce, which produces opulent merchants, and renders the monied interest considerable. Where merchants possess great stocks, whether represented by few or many pieces of metal, it must frequently happen, that when they either become tired of business, or have heirs unwilling or unfit to engage in commerce, a great deal of these riches will seek an annual and secure revenue. The plenty diminishes the price, and makes the lenders accept of a low interest. This consideration obliges many to keep their stocks in trade, and rather be content with low profits than dispose of their money at an under value. On the other hand, when commerce has become very

extensive, and employs very large stocks, there must arise rivalships among the merchants, which diminish the profits of trade, at the same time that they increase the trade itself. The low profits of merchandize induce the merchants to accept more willingly of a low interest, when they leave off business, and begin to indulge themselves in ease and indolence. It is needless, therefore, to enquire which of these circumstances, *viz. low interest or low profits*, is the cause, and which the effect? They both arise from an extensive commerce, and mutually forward each other. No man will accept of low profits, where he can have high interest; and no man will accept of low interest, where he can have high profits. An extensive commerce, by producing large stocks, diminishes both interest and profits; and is always assisted in its diminution of the one, by the proportional sinking of the other. I may add, that as low profits arise from the increase of commerce and industry, they serve in their turn to the farther increase of commerce, by rendering the commodities cheaper, encouraging the consumption, and heightening the industry. And thus, if we consider the whole connection of causes and effects, interest is the true barometer of the state, and its lowness is a sign almost infallible of the flourishing of a people. It proves the increase of industry, and its prompt circulation through the whole state, little inferior to a demonstration. And though, perhaps, it may not be impossible but a sudden and a great check to commerce may have a momentary effect of the same kind, by throwing so many stocks out of trade; it must be attended with such misery and want of employment in the poor, that, besides its short duration, it will not be possible to mistake the one case for the other.

Those

Those who have asserted, that the plenty of money was the cause of low interest, seem to have taken a collateral effect for a cause; since the same industry which sinks the interest, does commonly acquire great abundance of the precious metals. A variety of fine manufactures, with vigilant enterprising merchants, will soon draw money to a state, if it be any where to be found in the world. The same cause, by multiplying the conveniencies of life, and increasing industry, collects great riches into the hands of persons, who are not proprietors of land, and produces by that means a lowness of interest. But though both these effects, plenty of money and low interest, naturally arise from commerce and industry, they are altogether independent of each other. For suppose a nation removed into the *Pacific* ocean, without any foreign commerce, or any knowledge of navigation: Suppose, that this nation possesses always the same stock of coin, but is continually increasing in its numbers and industry: 'Tis evident, that the price of every commodity must gradually diminish in that kingdom; since 'tis the proportion between money and any species of goods, which fixes their mutual value; and, upon the present supposition, the conveniencies of life become every day more abundant, without any alteration on the current specie. A less quantity of money, therefore, amongst this people, will make a rich man, during the times of industry, than would serve to that purpose, in ignorant and slothful ages. Less money will build a house, portion a daughter, buy an estate, support a manufactory, or maintain a family and equipage. These are the uses for which men borrow money; and therefore, the greater or less quantity of it in a state has no influence on the interest.

But



But 'tis evident, that the greater or less stock of labour and commodities must have a great influence; since we really and in effect borrow these, when we take money upon interest. 'Tis true, when commerce is extended all over the globe, the most industrious nations always abound most with the precious metals: So that low interest and plenty of money are in fact almost inseparable. But still 'tis of consequence to know the principle whence any phænomenon arises, and to distinguish between a cause and a concomitant effect. Besides that the speculation is curious, it may frequently be of use in the conduct of public affairs. At least, it must be owned, that nothing can be of more use than to improve, by practice, the method of reasoning on these subjects, which of all others are the most important; though they are commonly treated in the loosest and most careless manner.

Another reason of this popular mistake with regard to the cause of low interest, seems to be the instance of some nations; where, after a sudden acquisition of money, or of the precious metals, by means of foreign conquest, the interest has fallen, not only among them, but in all the neighbouring states, as soon as that money was dispersed, and had insinuated itself into every corner. Thus, interest in SPAIN fell near a half immediately after the discovery of the WEST INDIES, as we are informed by GARCILASSO DE LA VEGA: And it has been ever since gradually sinking in every kingdom of EUROPE. Interest in ROME, after the conquest of EGYPT, fell from 6 to 4 *per cent.* as we learn from DION\*.

\* Lib. 51.

The causes of the sinking of interest upon such an event, seem different in the conquering country and in the neighbouring states; but in neither of them can we justly ascribe that effect merely to the increase of gold and silver.

In the conquering country, 'tis natural to imagine, that this new acquisition of money will fall into a few hands, and be gathered into large sums, which seek a secure revenue, either by the purchase of land or by interest; and consequently the same effect follows, for a little time, as if there had been a great accession of industry and commerce. The increase of lenders above the borrowers sinks the interest; and so much the faster, if those who have acquired those large sums, find no industry or commerce in the state, and no method of employing their money but by lending it at interest. But after this new mass of gold and silver has been digested, and has circulated through the whole state, affairs will soon return to their former situation; while the landlords and new money-holders living idly, squander above their income; and the former daily contract debt, and the latter incroach on their stock till its final extinction. The whole money may still be in the state, and make itself be felt by the increase of prices: But not being now collected into any large masses or stocks, the disproportion between the borrowers and lenders is the same as formerly, and consequently the high interest returns.

Accordingly we find, in ROME, that so early as TIBERIUS's time, interest had again mounted to 6 *per cent.* \* though no accident had happened to drain the empire of money. In TRA-

\* COLUMELLA, lib. 3. cap. 3.

JAN's time, money lent on mortgages in ITALY, bore 6 *per cent.* †; on common securities in BITHYNIA, 12 ‡. And if interest in SPAIN has not risen to its old pitch; this can be ascribed to nothing but the continuance of the same cause that sunk it, *viz.* the large fortunes continually made in the INDIES, which come over to SPAIN from time to time, and supply the demand of the borrowers. By this accidental and extraneous cause, more money is to be lent in SPAIN, that is, more money is collected into large sums, than would otherwise be found in a state, where there are so little commerce and industry.

As to the reduction of interest, which has followed in ENGLAND, FRANCE, and other kingdoms of EUROPE, that have no mines, it has been gradual; and has not proceeded from the increase of money, considered merely in itself; but from the increase of industry, which is the natural effect of the former increase, in that interval, before it raises the price of labour and provisions. For to return to the foregoing supposition; if the industry of ENGLAND had risen as much from other causes, (and that rise might easily have happened, though the stock of money had remained the same) must not all the same consequences have followed, which we observe at present? The same people would, in that case, be found in the kingdom, the same commodities, the same industry, manufactures, and commerce; and consequently the same merchants, with the same stocks, that is, with the same command over labour and commodities, only represented by a

† PLINII *epist.* lib. 7. *ep.* 18.

‡ *Id.* lib. 10. *ep.* 62.



smaller number of white or yellow pieces; which being a circumstance of no moment, would only affect the waggoner, porter, and trunk-maker. Luxury, therefore, manufactures, arts, industry, frugality, flourishing equally as at present, 'tis evident that interest must also have been as low; since that is the necessary result of all these circumstances; so far as they determine the profits of commerce, and the proportion between the borrowers and lenders in any state,



## E S S A Y V.

## OF THE BALANCE OF TRADE.

'TIS very usual, in nations ignorant of the nature of commerce, to prohibit the exportation of commodities, and to preserve among themselves whatever they think valuable and useful. They consider not, that, in this prohibition, they act directly contrary to their intention; and that the more is exported of any commodity, the more will be raised at home, of which they themselves will always have the first offer.

'Tis well known to the learned, that the ancient laws of ATHENS rendered the exportation of figs criminal; that being supposed a species of fruit so excellent in ATTICA, that the ATHENIANS esteemed it too delicious for the palate of any foreigner. And in this ridiculous prohibition they were so much in earnest, that informers were thence called *sycophants* among them, from two GREEK words, which signify *figs* and *discoverer* \*. There are proofs in many old acts of parliament of the same ignorance in the nature of commerce, particularly in the reign of EDWARD III. And to this day, in FRANCE, the exportation of corn is almost always prohibited; in order, as they say, to prevent famines; though 'tis evident, that nothing contri-

\* PLUT. De Curiositate.

butes more to the frequent famines which so much distress that fertile country.

The same jealous fear, with regard to money, has also prevailed among several nations; and it required both reason and experience to convince any people, that these prohibitions serve to no other purpose than to raise the exchange against them, and produce a still greater exportation.

These errors, one may say, are gross and palpable; but there still prevails, even in nations well acquainted with commerce, a strong jealousy with regard to the balance of trade, and a fear, that all their gold and silver may be leaving them. This seems to me, almost in every case, a very groundless apprehension; and I should as soon dread, that all our springs and rivers should be exhausted, as that money should abandon a kingdom where there are people and industry. Let us carefully preserve these latter advantages; and we need never be apprehensive of losing the former.

'Tis easy to observe, that all calculations concerning the balance of trade are founded on very uncertain facts and suppositions. The customhouse-books are allowed to be an insufficient ground of reasoning; nor is the rate of exchange much better; unless we consider it with all nations, and know also the proportion of the several sums remitted; which one may safely pronounce impossible. Every man who has ever reasoned on this subject, has always proved his theory, whatever it was, by facts and calculations, and by an enumeration of all the commodities sent to all foreign kingdoms.

The



The writings of Mr. GEE struck the nation with an universal panic, when they saw it plainly demonstrated, by a detail of particulars, that the balance was against them for so considerable a sum as must leave them without a single shilling in five or six years. But luckily, twenty years have since elapsed, with an expensive foreign war; and yet it is commonly supposed, that money is still more plentiful among us than in any former period.

Nothing can be more entertaining on this head than Dr. SWIFT; an author so quick in discerning the mistakes and absurdities of others. He says, in his *short view of the state of IRELAND*, that the whole cash of that kingdom amounted but to 500,000 *l.*; that out of this they remitted every year a neat million to ENGLAND, and had scarce any other source from which they could compensate themselves, and little other foreign trade but the importation of FRENCH wines, for which they paid ready money. The consequence of this situation, which must be owned to be disadvantageous, was, that in a course of three years, the current money of IRELAND, from 500,000 *l.* was reduced to less than two. And at present, I suppose, in a course of 30 years, it is absolutely nothing. Yet I know not how, that opinion of the advance of riches in IRELAND, which gave the Doctor so much indignation, seems still to continue, and gain ground with every body.

In short, this apprehension of the wrong balance of trade, appears of such a nature, that it discovers itself, wherever one is out of humour with the ministry, or is in low spirits; and as it can never be refuted by a particular detail of all the exports, which counterbalance the imports, it may here be proper to form

form a general argument, which may prove the impossibility of that event, as long as we preserve our people and our industry.

Suppose four fifths of all the money in BRITAIN to be annihilated in one night, and the nation reduced to the same condition, with regard to specie, as in the reigns of the HARRYS and EDWARDS, what would be the consequence? Must not the price of all labour and commodities sink in proportion, and every thing be sold as cheap as they were in those ages? What nation could then dispute with us in any foreign market, or pretend to navigate or to sell manufactures at the same price, which to us would afford sufficient profit? In how little time, therefore, must this bring back the money which we had lost, and raise us to the level of all the neighbouring nations? Where, after we have arrived, we immediately lose the advantage of the cheapness of labour and commodities; and the farther flowing in of money is stopped by our fulness and repletion.

Again, suppose, that all the money of BRITAIN were multiplied fivefold in a night, must not the contrary effect follow? Must not all labour and commodities rise to such an exorbitant height, that no neighbouring nations could afford to buy from us; while their commodities, on the other hand, became so cheap in comparison, that, in spite of all the laws which could be formed, they would be run in upon us, and our money flow out; till we fall to a level with foreigners, and lose that great superiority of riches, which had laid us under such disadvantages?

Now, 'tis evident, that the same causes which would correct these exorbitant inequalities, were they to happen miraculously,

must prevent their happening in the common course of nature, and must for ever, in all the neighbouring nations, preserve money nearly proportionable to the art and industry of each nation. All water, where-ever it communicates, remains always at a level. Ask naturalists the reason; they tell you, that were it to be raised in any one place, the superior gravity of that part not being balanced, must depress it, till it meets a counterpoise; and that the same cause which redresses the inequality when it happens, must for ever prevent it, without some violent external operation \*.

Can one imagine, that it had ever been possible, by any laws, or even by any art or industry, to have kept all the money in SPAIN, which the galleons have brought from the INDIES? or that all commodities could be sold in FRANCE for a tenth of the price which they would yield on the other side of the PYRENEES, without finding their way thither, and draining from that immense treasure? What other reason, indeed, is there, why all nations, at present, gain in their trade with SPAIN and PORTUGAL; but because it is impossible to heap up money, more than any fluid, beyond its proper level? The sovereigns of these countries have shown, that they wanted not inclination to keep their gold and silver to themselves, had it been in any degree practicable.

\* There is another cause, though more limited in its operation, which checks the wrong balance of trade, to every particular nation to which the kingdom trades. When we import more goods than we export, the exchange turns against us, and this becomes a new encouragement to export; as much as the charge of carriage and insurance of the money which becomes due would amount to. For the exchange can never rise higher than that sum.

But



But as any body of water may be raised above the level of the surrounding element, if the former has no communication with the latter; so in money, if the communication be cut off, by any material or physical impediment, (for all laws alone are ineffectual) there may, in such a case, be a very great inequality of money. Thus the immense distance of CHINA, together with the monopolies of our INDIA companies, obstructing the communication, preserve in EUROPE the gold and silver, especially the latter, in much greater plenty than they are found in that kingdom. But, notwithstanding this great obstruction, the force of the causes abovementioned is still evident. The skill and ingenuity of EUROPE in general surpasses perhaps that of CHINA, with regard to manual arts and manufactures; yet are we never able to trade thither without great disadvantage. And were it not for the continual recruits which we receive from AMERICA, money would very soon sink in EUROPE, and rise in CHINA, till it came nearly to a level in both places. Nor can any reasonable man doubt, but that industrious nation, were they as near us as POLAND or BARBARY, would drain us of the overplus of our specie, and draw to themselves a larger share of the WEST-INDIAN treasures. We need have no recourse to a physical attraction, to explain the necessity of this operation. There is a moral attraction, arising from the interests and passions of men, which is full as potent and infallible.

How is the balance kept in the provinces of every kingdom among themselves, but by the force of this principle, which makes it impossible for money to lose its level, and either to rise or sink beyond the proportion of the labour and commodities

dities which is in each province? Did not long experience make people easy on this head, what a fund of gloomy reflections might calculations afford a melancholy YORKSHIRE-MAN, while he computed and magnified the sums drawn to LONDON by taxes, absentees, commodities, and found on comparison the opposite articles so much inferior? And no doubt, had the *Heptarchy* subsisted in ENGLAND, the legislature of each state had been continually alarmed by the fear of a wrong balance; and as 'tis probable that the mutual hatred of these states would have been extremely violent on account of their close neighbourhood, they would have loaded and oppressed all commerce, by a jealous and superfluous caution. Since the union has removed the barriers between SCOTLAND and ENGLAND, which of these nations gains from the other by this free commerce? Or if the former kingdom has received any increase of riches, can it be reasonably accounted for by any thing but the increase of its art and industry? It was a common apprehension in ENGLAND, before the union, as we learn from L'ABBE DU BOS \*, that SCOTLAND would soon drain them of their treasure, were an open trade allowed; and on the other side the TWEED a contrary apprehension prevailed: With what justice in both, time has shown.

What happens in small portions of mankind, must take place in greater. The provinces of the ROMAN empire, no doubt, kept their balance with each other, and with ITALY, independent of the legislature; as much as the several counties of BRITAIN, or the several parishes of each county. And any man who travels over EUROPE at this day, may see by the

\* *Les interets d' ANGLETERRE mal-entendus.*

prices of commodities, that money, in spite of the absurd jealousy of princes and states, has brought itself nearly to a level; and that the difference between one kingdom and another is not greater in this respect, than it is often between different provinces of the same kingdom. Men naturally flock to capital cities, sea-ports, and navigable rivers. There we find more men, more industry, more commodities, and consequently more money; but still the latter difference holds proportion with the former, and the level is preserved\*.

Our jealousy and our hatred of FRANCE, are without bounds; and the former sentiment, at least, must be acknowledged very reasonable and well-grounded. These passions have occasioned innumerable barriers and obstructions upon commerce, where we are accused of being commonly the aggressors. But what have we gained by the bargain? We lost the FRENCH market for our woollen manufactures, and transferred the commerce of wine to SPAIN and PORTUGAL, where we buy much worse liquor at a higher price. There are few ENGLISHMEN who would not think their country absolutely ruined, were FRENCH wines sold in ENGLAND so cheap and in such abundance as to supplant, in some measure, all ale, and home-brewed liquors:

\* It must carefully be remarked, that throughout this discourse, wherever I speak of the level of money, I mean always its proportional level to the commodities, labour, industry, and skill, which is in the several states. And I assert, that where these advantages are double, triple, quadruple, to what they are in the neighbouring states, the money infallibly will also be double, triple, quadruple. The only circumstance that can obstruct the exactness of these proportions, is the expence of transporting the commodities from one place to another; and this expence is sometimes unequal. Thus the corn, cattle, cheese, butter, of DERBYSHIRE, cannot draw the money of LONDON; so much as the manufactures of LONDON draw the money of DERBYSHIRE. But this objection is only a seeming one: For so far as the transport of commodities is expensive, so far is the communication between the place obstructed and imperfect.



But would we lay aside prejudice, it would not be difficult to prove, that nothing could be more innocent, perhaps advantageous. Each new acre of vineyard planted in FRANCE, in order to supply ENGLAND with wine, would make it requisite for the FRENCH to take the produce of an ENGLISH acre, sown in wheat or barley, in order to subsist themselves; and 'tis evident, that we have thereby got command of the better commodity.

There are many edicts of the FRENCH King, prohibiting the planting of new vineyards, and ordering all those already planted to be grubbed up: So sensible are they in that country, of the superior value of corn, above every other product.

Mareschal VAUBAN complains often, and with reason, of the absurd duties which load the entry of those wines of LANGUEDOC, GUIENNE, and other southern provinces, that are imported into BRITANY and NORMANDY. He entertained no doubt but these latter provinces could preserve their balance, notwithstanding the open commerce which he recommends. And 'tis evident, that a few leagues more navigation to ENGLAND would make no difference; or if it did, that it must operate alike on the commodities of both kingdoms.

There is indeed one expedient by which it is possible to sink, and another by which we may raise, money beyond its natural level in any kingdom; but these cases, when examined, will be found to resolve into our general theory, and to bring additional authority to it.

I scarce know any method of sinking money below its level, but those institutions of banks, funds, and paper-credit, which  
are

are so much practised in this kingdom. These render paper equivalent to money, circulate it through the whole state, make it supply the place of gold and silver, raise proportionably the price of labour and commodities, and by that means either banish a great part of those precious metals, or prevent their farther increase. What can be more short-sighted than our reasonings on this head? We fancy, because an individual would be much richer, were his stock of money doubled, that the same good effect would follow were the money of every one increased; not considering, that this would raise as much the price of every commodity, and reduce every man, in time, to the same condition as before. It is only in our public negotiations and transactions with foreigners, that a greater stock of money is advantageous; and as our paper is there absolutely insignificant, we feel, by its means, all the ill effects arising from a great abundance of money, without reaping any of the advantages\*.

Suppose that there are 12 millions of paper, which circulate in the kingdom as money, (for we are not to imagine, that all our enormous funds are employed in that shape) and suppose the real cash of the kingdom to be 18 millions: Here is a state which is found by experience able to hold a stock of 30 millions. I say, if it be able to hold it, it must of necessity have acquired it in gold and silver, had we not obstructed the entrance of these metals by this new invention of paper. *Whence would it have acquired that sum?* From all the king-

\* We observed in Essay III. that money, when increasing, gives encouragement to industry, during the interval between the increase of money and rise of the prices. A good effect of this nature may follow too from paper credit; but it is dangerous to precipitate matters, at the risk of losing all by the falling of that credit, as must happen upon any violent shock in public affairs.

doms of the world. *But why?* Because, if you remove these 12 millions, money in this state is below its level, compared with our neighbours; and we must immediately draw from all of them, till we be full and saturate, so to speak, and can hold no more. By our present politics, we are as careful to stuff the nation with this fine commodity of bank-bills and chequer notes, as if we were afraid of being over-burthened with the precious metals.

'Tis not to be doubted, but the great plenty of bullion in FRANCE is, in a great measure, owing to the want of paper-credit. The FRENCH have no banks: Merchants bills do not there circulate as with us: Usury or lending on interest is not directly permitted; so that many have large sums in their coffers: Great quantities of plate are used in private houses; and all the churches are full of it. By this means, provision and labour still remain much cheaper among them, than in nations that are not half so rich in gold and silver. The advantages of this situation in point of trade, as well as in great public emergencies, are too evident to be disputed.

The same fashion a few years ago prevailed in GENOA, which still has place in ENGLAND and HOLLAND, of using services of CHINA ware instead of plate; but the senate, wisely foreseeing the consequence, prohibited the use of that brittle commodity beyond a certain extent; while the use of silver plate was left unlimited. And I suppose, in their late distresses, they felt the good effect of this ordinance. Our tax on plate is, perhaps, in this view, somewhat impolitic.

Before the introduction of paper-money into our colonies, they had gold and silver sufficient for their circulation. Since  
the



the introduction of that commodity, the least inconveniency that has followed is the total banishment of the precious metals, and after the abolition of paper, can it be doubted but money will return, while these colonies possess manufactures and commodities, the only thing valuable in commerce, and for whose sake alone all men desire money?

What pity LYCURGUS did not think of paper-credit, when he wanted to banish gold and silver from SPARTA! It would have served his purpose better than the lumps of iron he made use of as money; and would also have prevented more effectually all commerce with strangers, as being of so much less real and intrinsic value.

It must, however, be confessed, that, as all these questions of trade and money are extremely complicated, there are certain lights, in which this subject may be placed, so as to represent the advantages of paper-credit and banks to be superior to their disadvantages. That they banish specie and bullion from a state is undoubtedly true; and whoever looks no farther than this circumstance does well to condemn them; but specie and bullion are not of so great consequence as not to admit of a compensation, and even an overbalance from the increase of industry and of credit, which may be promoted by the right use of paper-money. It is well known of what advantage it is to a merchant to be able to discount his bills upon occasion; and every thing that facilitates this species of traffic is favourable to the general commerce of a state. But private bankers are enabled to give such credit by the credit they receive from the depositing of money in their shops; and the bank of ENGLAND in the same manner, from the liberty they have to  
issue

issue their notes in all payments. There was an invention of this kind, which was fallen upon some years ago by the banks of EDINBURGH; and which, as it is one of the most ingenious ideas that has been executed in commerce, has also been found very advantageous to SCOTLAND. It is there called a BANK-CREDIT; and is of this nature. A man goes to the bank and finds surety to the amount, we shall suppose, of five thousand pounds. This money, or any part of it, he has the liberty of drawing out whenever he pleases, and he pays only the ordinary interest for it, while it is in his hands. He may, when he pleases, repay any sum so small as twenty pounds, and the interest is discounted from the very day of the repayment. The advantages, resulting from this contrivance, are manifold. As a man may find surety nearly to the amount of his substance, and his bank-credit is equivalent to ready money, a merchant does hereby in a manner coin his houses, his household furniture, the goods in his warehouse, the foreign debts due to him, his ships at sea; and can, upon occasion, employ them in all payments, as if they were the current money of the country. If a man borrows five thousand pounds from a private hand, besides that it is not always to be found when required, he pays interest for it, whether he be using it or not: His bank-credit costs him nothing, except during the very moment in which it is of service to him: And this circumstance is of equal advantage as if he had borrowed money at much lower interest. Merchants, likewise, from this invention, acquire a great facility in supporting each other's credit, which is a considerable security against bankruptcies. A man, when his own bank-credit is exhausted, goes to any of his neighbours who is not

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in the same condition; and he gets the money, which he replaces at his convenience.

After this practice had taken place during some years at EDINBURGH, several companies of merchants at GLASGOW carried the matter farther. They associated themselves into different banks, and issued notes so low as ten shillings, which they used in all payments for goods, manufactures, tradesmen, labour of all kinds; and these notes, from the established credit of the companies, passed as money in all payments throughout the country. By this means, a stock of five thousand pounds was able to perform the same operations as if it were ten; and merchants were thereby enabled to trade to a greater extent, and to require less profit in all their transactions. In NEWCASTLE and BRISTOL, as well as other trading places, the merchants have since instituted banks of a like nature, in imitation of those in GLASGOW. But whatever other advantages result from these inventions, it must still be allowed that they banish the precious metals; and nothing can be a more evident proof of it, than a comparison of the past and present condition of SCOTLAND in that particular. It was found, upon the recoinage made after the union, that there was near a million of specie in that country: But notwithstanding the great increase of riches, commerce and manufactures of all kinds, it is thought, that, even where there is no extraordinary drain made by ENGLAND, the current specie will not now amount to a fifth of that sum.

But as our projects of paper-credit are almost the only expedient by which we can sink money below its level; so, in my opinion, the only expedient by which we can raise money



above its level, is a practice which we should all exclaim against as destructive, *viz.* the gathering large sums into a public treasure, locking them up, and absolutely preventing their circulation. The fluid not communicating with the neighbouring element, may, by such an artifice, be raised to what height we please. To prove this, we need only return to our first supposition, of the annihilating the half or any part of our cash; where we found, that the immediate consequence of such an event would be the attraction of an equal sum from all the neighbouring kingdoms. Nor does there seem to be any necessary bounds set, by the nature of things, to this practice of hoarding. A small city like GENEVA, continuing this policy for ages, might ingross nine tenths of the money of EUROPE. There seems, indeed, in the nature of man, an invincible obstacle to that immense growth of riches. A weak state, with an enormous treasure, will soon become a prey to some of its poorer, but more powerful neighbours. A great state would dissipate its wealth in dangerous and ill-concerted projects; and probably destroy, with it, what is much more valuable, the industry, morals and numbers of its people. The fluid in this case, raised to too great a height, bursts and destroys the vessel that contains it; and mixing itself with the surrounding element, soon falls to its proper level.

So little are we commonly acquainted with this principle, that though all historians agree in relating uniformly so recent an event, as the immense treasure amassed by HARRY VII. (which they make amount to 1,700,000 pounds) we rather reject their concurring testimony, than admit of a fact which agrees so ill with our inveterate prejudices. 'Tis indeed probable, that that sum might be three fourths of all the money

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IN ENGLAND. But where is the difficulty that such a sum might be amassed in twenty years, by a cunning, rapacious, frugal, and almost absolute monarch? Nor is it probable, that the diminution of circulating money was ever sensibly felt by the people, or ever did them any prejudice. The sinking of the prices of all commodities would immediately replace it, by giving ENGLAND the advantage in its commerce with all the neighbouring kingdoms.

Have we not an instance in the small republic of ATHENS with its allies, who in about fifty years between the MEDIAN and PELOPONNESIAN wars, amassed a sum greater than that of HARRY VII. \*? For all the GREEK historians † and orators ‡ agree, that the ATHENIANS collected in the citadel more than 10,000 talents, which they afterwards dissipated to their own ruin, in rash and imprudent enterprizes. But when this money was set a-running, and began to communicate with the surrounding fluid; what was the consequence? Did it remain in the state? No. For we find by the memorable *census* mentioned by DEMOSTHENES || and POLYBIUS †, that, in about fifty years afterwards, the whole value of the republic, comprehending lands, houses, commodities, slaves, and money, was less than 6000 talents.

What an ambitious high-spirited people was this, to collect and keep in their treasury, with a view to conquests, a sum,

There were about eight ounces of silver in a pound *Sterling* in HARRY VII.'s time.

† THUCYDIDES, lib. 2. and DION. SIC. lib. 12.

‡ Vid. *ÆSCHINIS et DEMOSTHENIS Epist.*

|| *Hist. Euprociæ.*

† Lib. 2. cap. 62.

which it was every day in the power of the citizens, by a single vote, to distribute among themselves, and which would go near to triple the riches of every individual? For we must observe, that the numbers and private riches of the ATHENIANS are said by ancient writers to have been no greater at the beginning of the PELOPONNESIAN war, than at the beginning of the MACEDONIAN.

Money was little more plentiful in GREECE during the age of PHILIP and PERSEUS, than in ENGLAND during that of HARRY VII.: Yet these two monarchs in thirty years \* collected from the small kingdom of MACEDON, a much larger treasure than that of the ENGLISH monarch. PAULUS ÆMILIUS brought to ROME about 1,700,000 pounds *Sterling* †. PLINY says, 2,400,000 ‡. And that was but a part of the MACEDONIAN treasure. The rest was dissipated by the resistance and flight of PERSEUS §.

We may learn from STANYAN, that the canton of BERNE had 300,000 pounds lent at interest, and had above six times as much in their treasury. Here then is a sum hoarded of 1,800,000 pounds *Sterling*, which is at least quadruple of what should naturally circulate in such a petty state; and yet no one who travels into the PAIS DE VAUX, or any part of that canton, observes any want of money more than could be supposed in a country of that extent, soil, and situation. On the contrary, there are scarce any inland provinces in the continent of FRANCE or GERMANY, where the inhabitants are at this time so opulent, though that canton has vastly increased its

\* TITI LIVII, lib. 45. cap. 40.

† VEL. PATERC. lib. 1. cap. 9.

‡ Lib. 33. cap. 3.

§ TITI LIVII, *ibid.*



treasure since 1714, the time when STANYAN wrote his judicious account of SWITZERLAND\*.

The account given by APPIAN † of the treasure of the PROLOMIES, is so prodigious, that one cannot admit of it; and so much the less, because the historian says, the other successors of ALEXANDER were all so frugal, and had many of them treasures not much inferior. For this saving humour of the neighbouring princes must necessarily have checked the frugality of the EGYPTIAN monarchs, according to the foregoing theory. The sum he mentions is 740,000 talents, or 191,166,666 pounds 13 shillings and 4 pence, according to Dr. ARBUTHNOT's computation. And yet APPIAN says, that he extracted his account from the public records; and he was himself a native of ALEXANDRIA.

From these principles we may learn what judgment we ought to form of those numberless bars, obstructions, and imposts, which all nations of Europe, and none more than ENGLAND, have put upon trade; from an exorbitant desire of amassing money, which never will heap up beyond its level, while it circulates; or from an ill grounded apprehension of losing their specie, which never will sink below it. Could any thing scatter our riches, it would be such impolitic contrivances. But this general ill effect, however, results from them, that they deprive neighbouring nations of that free communication and exchange, which the Author of the world has intended, by

\* The poverty which STANYAN speaks of is only to be seen in the most mountainous cantons, where there is no commodity to bring money: And even there the people are not poorer than in the diocess of SALTSBURG on the one hand, or SAVOY on the other.

† *Præm.*

giving them soils, climates, and geniuses, so different from each other.

Our modern politics embrace the only method of banishing money, the using paper-credit; they reject the only method of amassing it, the practice of hoarding; and they adopt a hundred contrivances, which serve to no purpose but to check industry, and rob ourselves and our neighbours of the common benefits of art and nature.

All taxes, however, upon foreign commodities, are not to be regarded as prejudicial or useless, but those only which are founded on the jealousy above-mentioned. A tax on GERMAN linen encourages home manufactures, and thereby multiplies our people and industry. A tax on brandy increases the sale of rum, and supports our southern colonies. And as 'tis necessary imposts should be levied, for the support of government, it may be thought more convenient to lay them on foreign commodities, which can easily be intercepted at the port, and subjected to the impost. We ought, however, always to remember the maxim of Dr. SWIFT, That, in the arithmetic of the customs, two and two make not four, but often make only one. It can scarcely be doubted, but if the duties on wine were lowered to a third, they would yield much more to the government than at present: Our people might thereby afford to drink commonly a better and more wholesome liquor; and no prejudice would ensue to the balance of trade, of which we are so jealous. The manufacture of ale, beyond the agriculture, is but inconsiderable, and gives employment to few hands. The transport of wine and corn would not be much inferior.

But

But are there not frequent instances, you will say, of states and kingdoms, which were formerly rich and opulent, and are now poor and beggarly? Has not the money left them, with which they formerly abounded? I answer, If they lose their trade, industry and people, they cannot expect to keep their gold and silver: For these precious metals will hold proportion to the former advantages. When LISBON and AMSTERDAM got the EAST-INDIA trade from VENICE and GENOA, they also got the profits and money which arose from it. Where the seat of government is transferred, where expensive armies are maintained at a distance, where great funds are possessed by foreigners; there naturally follows from these causes a diminution of the specie. But these, we may observe, are violent and forcible methods of carrying away money, and are in time commonly attended with the transport of people and industry. But where these remain, and the drain is not continued, the money always finds its way back again, by a hundred canals, of which we have no notion or suspicion. What immense treasures have been spent, by so many nations, in FLANDERS since the revolution, in the course of three long wars? More money perhaps than the half of what is at present in all EUROPE. But what has now become of it? Is it in the narrow compass of the AUSTRIAN provinces? No, surely: It has most of it returned to the several countries whence it came, and has followed that art and industry by which at first it was acquired. For above a thousand years, the money of EUROPE has been flowing to ROME, by an open and sensible current; but it has been emptied by many secret and insensible canals: And the want of industry and commerce renders



renders at present the papal dominions the poorest territories in all ITALY.

In short, a government has great reason to preserve with care its people and its manufactures. Its money, it may safely trust to the course of human affairs, without fear or jealousy. Or if it ever give attention to this latter circumstance, it ought only to be so far as it affects the former.

## E S S A Y VI.

## OF THE JEALOUSY OF TRADE.

**H**AVING endeavoured to remove one species of ill-founded jealousy, which is so prevalent among commercial nations, it may not be amiss to mention another, which seems equally groundless. Nothing is more usual, among states which have made some advances in commerce, than to look on the progress of their neighbours with a suspicious eye, to consider all trading states as their rivals, and to suppose that it is impossible for any of them to flourish, but at their expence. In opposition to this narrow and malignant opinion, I will venture to assert, that the increase of riches and commerce in any one nation, instead of hurting, commonly promotes the riches and commerce of all its neighbours; and that a state can scarcely carry its trade and industry very far, where all the surrounding states are buried in ignorance, sloth, and barbarism.

It is obvious, that the domestic industry of a people cannot be hurt by the greatest prosperity of their neighbours; and as this branch of commerce is undoubtedly the most important in any extensive kingdom, we are so far removed from all reason of jealousy. But I go farther, and observe, that where an open communication is preserved among nations, it is im-

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possible but the domestic industry of every one must receive an increase from the improvements of the others. Compare the situation of GREAT BRITAIN at present, with what it was two centuries ago. All the arts both of agriculture and manufactures were then extremely rude and imperfect. Every improvement which we have since made, has arisen from our imitation of foreigners; and we ought so far to esteem it happy, that they had previously made advances in arts and ingenuity. But this intercourse is still upheld to our great advantage: Notwithstanding the advanced state of our manufactures, we daily adopt in every art, the inventions and improvements of our neighbours. The commodity is first imported from abroad, to our great discontent, while we imagine that it drains us of our money: Afterwards, the art itself is gradually imported, to our visible advantage: Yet we continue still to repine, that our neighbours should possess any art, industry, and invention; forgetting that had they not first instructed us, we should have been at present barbarians; and did they not still continue their instructions, the arts must fall into a state of languor, and lose that emulation and novelty which contribute so much to their advancement.

The increase of domestic industry lays the foundation of foreign commerce. Where a great number of commodities are raised and perfected for the home-market, there will always be found some which can be exported with advantage. But if our neighbours have no art nor cultivation, they cannot take them; because they will have nothing to give in exchange. In this respect, states are in the same condition as individuals. A single man can scarce be industrious, where all his fellow-citizens



zens are idle. The riches of the several members of a community contribute to increase my riches, whatever profession I may follow. They consume the produce of my industry, and afford me the produce of theirs in return.

Nor need any state entertain apprehensions, that their neighbours will improve to such a degree in every art and manufacture, as to have no demand from them. Nature, by giving a diversity of geniuses, climates, and soils to different nations, has secured their mutual intercourse and commerce, as long as they all remain industrious and civilized. Nay, the more the arts increase in any state, the more will be its demands from its industrious neighbours. The inhabitants, having become opulent and skilful, desire to have every commodity in the utmost perfection; and as they have plenty of commodities to give in exchange, they make large importations from every foreign country. The industry of the nations from whom they import, receives encouragement: Their own is also increased, by the sale of the commodities which they give in exchange.

But what if a nation has any staple commodity, such as the woollen manufacture is to ENGLAND? Must not the interfering of their neighbours in that manufacture be a loss to them? I answer, that when any commodity is denominated the staple of a kingdom, it is supposed that that kingdom has some peculiar and natural advantages for raising the commodity; and if, notwithstanding these advantages, they lose such a manufactory, they ought to blame their own idleness, or bad government, not the industry of their neighbours. It ought also to be considered, that by the increase of industry among the neighbouring nations, the consumption of every particular

species of commodity is also increased; and though foreign manufactures interfere with us in the market, the demand for our product may still continue, or even increase. And even should it diminish, ought the consequence to be esteemed so fatal? If the spirit of industry be preserved, it may easily be diverted from one branch to another; and the manufactures of wool, for instance, be employed in linen, silk, iron, or any other commodities, for which there appears to be a demand. We need not apprehend, that all the objects of industry will be exhausted, or that our manufacturers, while they remain on an equal footing with those of our neighbours, will be in danger of wanting employment. The emulation among rival nations serves rather to keep industry alive in all of them: And any people is happier who possess a variety of manufactures, than if they enjoyed one single great manufacture, in which they are all employed. Their situation is less precarious, and they will feel less sensibly those revolutions and uncertainties to which every particular branch of commerce will always be exposed.

The only commercial state which ought to dread the improvements and industry of their neighbours, is such a one as HOLLAND, which enjoying no extent of land, nor possessing any native commodity, flourishes only by being the brokers, and factors, and carriers of others. Such a people may naturally apprehend, that as soon as the neighbouring states come to know and pursue their interest, they will take into their own hands the management of their affairs, and deprive their brokers of that profit, which they formerly reaped from it. But though this consequence may naturally be dreaded, it is very

very long before it takes place; and by art and industry it may be warded off for many generations, if not wholly eluded. The advantage of superior stocks and correspondence is so great, that it is not easily overcome; and as all the transactions increase by the increase of industry in the neighbouring states, even a people whose commerce stands on this precarious basis, may at first reap a considerable profit from the flourishing condition of their neighbours. The DUTCH, having mortgaged all their revenues, make not such a figure in political transactions as formerly; but their commerce is surely equal to what it was in the middle of the last century, when they were reckoned among the great powers of EUROPE.

Were our narrow and malignant politics to meet with success, we should reduce all our neighbouring nations to the same state of sloth and ignorance that prevails in MOROCCO and the coast of BARBARY. But what would be the consequence? They could send us no commodities: They could take none from us: Our domestic commerce itself would languish for want of emulation, example, and instruction: And we ourselves should soon fall into the same abject condition to which we had reduced them. I shall therefore venture to acknowledge, that not only as a man, but as a BRITISH subject, I pray for the flourishing commerce of GERMANY, SPAIN, ITALY, and even FRANCE itself. I am at least certain, that GREAT BRITAIN, and all these nations, would flourish more, did their sovereigns and ministers adopt such enlarged and benevolent sentiments towards each other.



## E S S A Y VII.

## OF THE BALANCE OF POWER.

IT is a question, whether the *idea* of the balance of power be owing intirely to modern policy, or whether the *phrase* only has been invented in these latter ages? 'Tis certain, that XENOPHON\*, in his institution of CYRUS, represents the combination of the ASIATIC powers to have arisen from a jealousy of the increasing force of the MEDES and PERSIANS; and though that elegant composition should be supposed altogether a romance, this sentiment, ascribed by the author to the eastern princes, is at least a proof of the prevailing notions of antient times.

In all the politics of GREECE, the anxiety with regard to the balance of power, is most apparent, and is expressly pointed out to us, even by the antient historians. THUCYDIDES † represents the league which was formed against ATHENS, and which produced the PELOPONNESIAN war, as intirely owing to this principle. And after the decline of ATHENS, when the THEBANS and LACEDEMONIANS disputed for sovereignty, we find, that the ATHENIANS (as well as many other republics) threw themselves always into the lighter

\* Lib. i.

† Lib. i.

scale, and endeavoured to preserve the balance. They supported THEBES against SPARTA, till the great victory gained by EPAMINONDAS at LEUCTRA; after which they immediately went over to the conquered, from generosity, as they pretended, but, in reality, from their jealousy of the conquerors †.

Whoever will read DEMOSTHENES's oration for the MEGALOPOLITANS, may see the utmost refinements on this principle, which ever entered into the head of a VENETIAN or ENGLISH speculatist. And upon the first rise of the MACEDONIAN power, this orator immediately discovered the danger, sounded the alarm through all GREECE, and at last assembled that confederacy under the banners of ATHENS, which fought the great and decisive battle of CHAERONEA.

'Tis true, the GRECIAN wars are regarded by historians as wars of emulation rather than politics; and each state seems to have had more in view the honour of leading the rest, than any well-grounded hopes of authority and dominion. If we consider, indeed, the small number of inhabitants in any one republic, compared to the whole, the great difficulty of forming sieges in those times, and the extraordinary bravery and discipline of every freeman among that noble people; we shall conclude, that the balance of power was, of itself, sufficiently secured in GREECE, and needed not to be guarded with that caution which may be requisite in other ages. But whether we ascribe the shifting sides in all the GRECIAN republics to *jealous emulation* or *cautious politics*, the effects were alike,

† XENOPH. Hist. GRÆC. lib. 6. & 7.

and every prevailing power was sure to meet with a confederacy against it, and that often composed of its former friends and allies.

• The same principle, call it envy or prudence, which produced the *Ostracism* of ATHENS, and *Petalism* of SYRACUSE, and expelled every citizen whose fame or power overtopped the rest; the same principle, I say, naturally discovered itself in foreign politics, and soon raised enemies to the leading state, however moderate in the exercise of its authority.

The PERSIAN monarch was really, in his force, a petty prince compared to the GRECIAN republics; and therefore it behoved him, from views of safety more than from emulation, to interest himself in their quarrels, and to support the weaker side in every contest. This was the advice given by ALCIBIADES to TISSAPHERNES \*, and it prolonged near a century the date of the PERSIAN empire; till the neglect of it for a moment, after the first appearance of the aspiring genius of PHILIP, brought that lofty and frail edifice to the ground, with a rapidity of which there are few instances in the history of mankind.

The successors of ALEXANDER showed an infinite jealousy of the balance of power; a jealousy founded on true politics and prudence, and which preserved distinct for several ages the partitions made after the death of that famous conqueror. The fortune and ambition of ANTIGONUS † threatened them anew with an universal monarchy; but their combination, and their victory at IPSUS saved them. And in after times, we

\* THEOPH. lib. 8.

† DION. SIC. lib. 20.

find,



find, that as the Eastern princes considered the GREEKS and MACEDONIANS as the only real military force with whom they had any intercourse, they kept always a watchful eye over that part of the world. The PTOLEMIES, in particular, supported first ARATUS and the ACHAEANS, and then CLEOMENES king of SPARTA, from no other view than as a counterbalance to the MACEDONIAN monarchs. For this is the account which POLYBIUS gives of the EGYPTIAN politics †.

The reason why 'tis supposed, that the ancients were entirely ignorant of the *balance of power*, seems to be drawn from the ROMAN history more than the GRECIAN; and as the transactions of the former are generally the most familiar to us, we have thence formed all our conclusions. It must be owned, that the ROMANS never met with any such general combination or confederacy against them, as might naturally be expected from their rapid conquests and declared ambition; but were allowed peaceably to subdue their neighbours, one after another, till they extended their dominion over the whole known world. Not to mention the fabulous history of their ITALIC wars; there was, upon HANNIBAL'S invasion of the ROMAN state, a very remarkable crisis, which ought to have called up the attention of all civilized nations. It appeared afterwards (nor was it difficult to be observed at the time) ‡ that this was a contest for universal empire; and yet no prince or state seems to have been in the least alarmed about the event

† Lib. 2. cap. 51.

‡ It was observed by some, as appears by the speech of AGE LAUS of NAUFACTUM, in the general congress of GREECE. See POLYB. lib. 5. cap. 104.

or issue of the quarrel. PHILIP of MACEDON remained neuter, till he saw the victories of HANNIBAL; and then most imprudently formed an alliance with the conqueror, upon terms still more imprudent. He stipulated, that he was to assist the CARTHAGINIAN state in their conquest of ITALY; after which they engaged to send over forces into GREECE, to assist him in subduing the GRECIAN commonwealths \*.

The RHODIAN and ACHAEAN republics are much celebrated by ancient historians for their wisdom and sound policy; yet both of them assisted the ROMANS in their wars against PHILIP and ANTIOCHUS. And what may be esteemed still a stronger proof that this maxim was not familiarly known in those ages; no ancient author has ever remarked the imprudence of these measures, nor has even blamed that absurd treaty above mentioned, made by PHILIP with the CARTHAGINIANS. Princes and statesmen may in all ages be blinded in their reasonings with regard to events, beforehand: But 'tis somewhat extraordinary, that historians, afterwards, should not form a sounder judgment of them.

MASSINISSA, ATTALUS, PRUSIAS, in satisfying their private passions, were, all of them, the instruments of the ROMAN greatness; and never seem to have suspected, that they were forging their own chains, while they advanced the conquests of their ally. A simple treaty and agreement between MASSINISSA and the CARTHAGINIANS, so much required by mutual interest, barred the ROMANS from all entrance into AFRICA, and preserved liberty to mankind.

\* TITI-LIVII lib. 23. cap. 33.

The only prince we meet with in the ROMAN history, who seems to have understood the balance of power, is HIERO king of SYRACUSE. Though the ally of ROME, he sent assistance to the CARTHAGINIANS, during the war of the auxiliaries: "Esteeming it requisite," says POLYBIUS†, "both in order to retain his dominions in SICILY, and to preserve the ROMAN friendship, that CARTHAGE should be safe; lest by its fall the remaining power should be able, without contrast or opposition, to execute every purpose and undertaking. And here he acted with great wisdom and prudence. For that is never, on any account, to be overlooked; nor ought such a force ever to be thrown into one hand, as to incapacitate the neighbouring states from defending their rights against it." Here is the aim of modern politics pointed out in express terms.

In short, the maxim of preserving the balance of power is founded so much on common sense and obvious reasoning, that 'tis impossible it could altogether have escaped antiquity, where we find, in other particulars, so many marks of deep penetration and discernment. If it was not so generally known and acknowledged as at present, it had, at least, an influence on all the wiser and more experienced princes and politicians. And indeed, even at present, however generally known and acknowledged among speculative reasoners, it has not, in practice, an authority much more extensive among those who govern the world.

After the fall of the ROMAN empire, the form of government established by the northern conquerors, incapacitated

† Lib. i. cap. 83.



them, in a great measure, from farther conquests, and long maintained each state in its proper boundaries. But when vassalage and the feudal militia were abolished, mankind were anew alarmed by the danger of universal monarchy, from the union of so many kingdoms and principalities in the person of the emperor CHARLES. But the power of the house of AUSTRIA, founded on extensive but divided dominions, and their riches, derived chiefly from mines of gold and silver, were more likely to decay, of themselves, from internal defects, than to overthrow all the bulwarks raised against them. In less than a century, the force of that violent and haughty race was shattered, their opulence dissipated, their splendour eclipsed. A new power succeeded, more formidable to the liberties of EUROPE, possessing all the advantages of the former, and labouring under none of its defects; except a share of that spirit of bigotry and persecution, with which the house of AUSTRIA were so long, and still are so much infatuated.

EUROPE has now, for above a century, remained on the defensive against the greatest force that ever, perhaps, was formed by the civil or political combination of mankind. And such is the influence of the maxim here treated of, that though that ambitious nation, in the five last general wars, have been victorious in four\*, and unsuccessful only in one†, they have not much enlarged their dominions, nor acquired a total ascendant over EUROPE. There remains rather room to hope,

\* Those concluded by the peace of the PYRENEES, NIMEGUEN, RYSWICK, and AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

† That concluded by the peace of UTRECHT,

that,

that, by maintaining the resistance some time, the natural revolutions of human affairs, together with unforeseen events and accidents, may guard us against universal monarchy, and preserve the world from so great an evil.

In the three last of these general wars, BRITAIN has stood foremost in the glorious struggle; and she still maintains her station, as guardian of the general liberties of EUROPE, and patron of mankind. Beside her advantages of riches and situation, her people are animated with such a national spirit, and are so fully sensible of the inestimable blessings of their government, that we may hope their vigour never will languish in so necessary and so just a cause. On the contrary, if we may judge by the past, their passionate ardour seems rather to require some moderation; and they have oftener erred from a laudable excess than from a blameable deficiency.

In the *first* place, we seem to have been more possessed with the antient GREEK spirit of jealous emulation, than actuated with the prudent views of modern politics. Our wars with FRANCE have been begun with justice, and even, perhaps, from necessity; but have always been too far pushed from obstinacy and passion. The same peace which was afterwards made at RYSWICK in 1697, was offered so early as the ninety-two; that concluded at UTRECHT in 1712, might have been finished on as good conditions at GERTRUYTENBERG in the eight; and we might have given at FRANCFORT, in 1743, the same terms, which we were glad to accept of at AIX-LA-CHAPELLE in the forty-eight. Here then we see, that above half of our wars with FRANCE, and all our public debts, are owing more to our own imprudent vehemence, than to the ambition of our neighbours.

In

In the *second* place, we are so declared in our opposition to FRENCH power, and so alert in defence of our allies, that they always reckon upon our force as upon their own; and expecting to carry on war at our expence, refuse all reasonable terms of accommodation. *Habent subjectos, tanquam suos; viles, ut alienos.* All the world knows, that the factious vote of the House of Commons, in the beginning of the last parliament, with the professed humour of the nation, made the queen of HUNGARY inflexible in her terms, and prevented that agreement with PRUSSIA, which would immediately have restored the general tranquillity of EUROPE.

In the *third* place, we are such true combatants, that, when once engaged, we lose all concern for ourselves and our posterity, and consider only how we may best annoy the enemy. To mortgage our revenues at so deep a rate, in wars, where we were only accessories, was surely the most fatal delusion, that a nation, who had any pretension to politics and prudence, has ever yet been guilty of. That remedy of funding, if it be a remedy, and not rather a poison, ought, in all reason, to be reserved to the last extremity; and no evil, but the greatest and most urgent, should ever induce us to embrace so dangerous an expedient.

These excesses, to which we have been carried, are prejudicial; and may, perhaps, in time, become still more prejudicial another way, by begetting, as is usual, the opposite extreme, and rendering us totally careless and supine with regard to the fate of EUROPE. The ATHENIANS, from the most bustling, intriguing, warlike people of GREECE, finding their error in thrusting themselves into every quarrel, abandoned



all attention to foreign affairs; and in no contest ever took party on either side, except by their flatteries and complaisance to the victor.

Enormous monarchies are, probably, destructive to human nature; in their progress, in their continuance\*, and even in their downfall, which never can be very distant from their establishment. The military genius which aggrandized the monarchy, soon leaves the court, the capital, and the center of such a government; while the wars are carried on at a great distance, and interest so small a part of the state. The ancient nobility, whose affections attach them to their sovereign, live all at court; and never will accept of military employments, which would carry them to remote and barbarous frontiers, where they are distant both from their pleasures and their fortune. The arms of the state must, therefore, be trusted to mercenary strangers, without zeal, without attachment, without honour; ready on every occasion to turn them against the prince, and join each desperate malecontent, who offers pay and plunder. This is the necessary progress of human affairs: Thus human nature checks itself in its airy elevations: Thus ambition blindly labours for the destruction of the conqueror, of his family, and of every thing near and dear to him. The BOURBONS, trusting to the support of their brave, faithful, and affectionate nobility, would push their advantage, without reserve or limitation. These, while fired with glory and emulation, can bear the fatigues and dangers of war; but never would submit to languish in the garrisons of HUNGARY or

\* If the ROMAN empire was of advantage, it could only proceed from this, that mankind were generally in a very disorderly, uncivilized condition, before its establishment.

LITHUANIA, forgot at court, and sacrificed to the intrigues of every minion or mistress, who approaches the prince. The troops are filled with CRAVATES and TARTARS, HUSARS and COSSACS; intermingled, perhaps, with a few soldiers of fortune from the better provinces: And the melancholy fate of the ROMAN emperors, from the same cause, is renewed over and over again, till the final dissolution of the monarchy.

## E S S A Y VIII.

## O F T A X E S.

**T**HERE is a maxim, that prevails among those whom in this country we call *ways and means men*, and who are denominated *Financiers and Maltotiers* in FRANCE, *That every new tax creates a new ability in the subject to bear it, and that each increase of public burdens increases proportionably the industry of the people.* This maxim is of such a nature as is most likely to be extremely abused; and is so much the more dangerous, as its truth cannot be altogether denied; but it must be owned, when kept within certain bounds, to have some foundation in reason and experience.

When a tax is laid upon commodities, which are consumed by the common people, the necessary consequence may seem to be, that either the poor must retrench something from their way of living, or raise their wages, so as to make the burden of the tax fall intirely upon the rich. But there is a third consequence, which very often follows upon taxes, *viz.* that the poor increase their industry, perform more work, and live as well as before, without demanding more for their labour. Where taxes are moderate, are laid on gradually, and affect not the necessities of life, this consequence naturally follows;



and 'tis certain, that such difficulties often serve to excite the industry of a people, and render them more opulent and laborious, than others, who enjoy the greatest advantages. For we may observe, as a parallel instance, that the most commercial nations have not always possessed the greatest extent of fertile land; but, on the contrary, that they have laboured under many natural disadvantages. TYRE, ATHENS, CARTHAGE, RHODES, GENOA, VENICE, HOLLAND, are strong examples to this purpose. And in all history, we find only three instances of large and fertile countries, which have possessed much trade; the NETHERLANDS, ENGLAND and FRANCE. The two former seem to have been allured by the advantages of their maritime situation and the necessity they lay under of frequenting foreign ports, in order to procure what their own climate refused them. And as to FRANCE, trade has come very late into that kingdom, and seems to have been the effect of reflection and observation in an ingenious and enterprising people, who remarked the immense riches acquired by such of the neighbouring nations as cultivated navigation and commerce.

The places mentioned by CICERO\*, as possessed of the greatest commerce in his time, are ALEXANDRIA, COLCHOS, TYRE, SIDON, ANDROS, CYPRUS, PAMPHYLIA, LYCIA, RHODES, CHIOS, BYZANTIUM, LESBOS, SMYRNA, MILETUM, COOS. All these, except ALEXANDRIA, were either small islands, or narrow territories. And that city owed its trade entirely to the happiness of its situation.

Since therefore some natural necessities or disadvantages may be thought favourable to industry, why may not artificial

\* Epist. ad ATT. lib. 9. ep. 11.

burdens have the same effect? Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE†, we may observe, ascribes the industry of the DUTCH intirely to necessity, proceeding from their natural disadvantages; and illustrates his doctrine by a very striking comparison with IRELAND; “where,” says he, “by the largeness and plenty of the soil, and scarcity of people, all things necessary to life are so cheap, that an industrious man, by two days labour, may gain enough to feed him the rest of the week. Which I take to be a very plain ground of the laziness attributed to the people. For men naturally prefer ease before labour, and will not take pains if they can live idle; though when, by necessity, they have been inured to it, they cannot leave it, being grown a custom necessary to their health, and to their very entertainment. Nor perhaps is the change harder, from constant ease to labour, than from constant labour to ease.” After which the author proceeds to confirm his doctrine, by enumerating, as above, the places where trade has most flourished, in antient and modern times; and which are commonly observed to be such narrow confined territories, as beget a necessity for industry.

’Tis always observed, in years of scarcity, if it be not extreme, that the poor labour more, and really live better, than in years of great plenty, when they indulge themselves in idleness and riot. I have been told, by a considerable manufacturer, that in the year 1740, when bread and provisions of all kinds were very dear, his workmen not only made a shift to live, but paid debts, which they had contracted

† Account of the NETHERLANDS, Chap. 6.

in former years, that were much more favourable and abundant\*.

This doctrine, therefore, with regard to taxes, may be admitted in some degree: But beware of the abuse. Exorbitant taxes, like extreme necessity, destroy industry, by producing despair; and even before they reach this pitch, they raise the wages of the labourer and manufacturer, and heighten the price of all commodities. An attentive disinterested legislature, will observe the point when the emolument ceases, and the prejudice begins: But as the contrary character is much more common, 'tis to be feared that taxes, all over EUROPE, are multiplying to such a degree, as will intirely crush all art and industry; though, perhaps, their first increase, together with other circumstances, might have contributed to the growth of these advantages.

The best taxes are such as are levied upon consumptions, especially those of luxury; because such taxes are less felt by the people. They seem, in some measure, voluntary; since a man may chuse how far he will use the commodity which is taxed: They are paid gradually and insensibly: And being confounded with the natural price of the commodity, they are scarcely perceived by the consumers. Their only disadvantage is, that they are expensive in the levying.

Taxes upon possessions are levied without expence; but have every other disadvantage. Most states, however, are obliged to have recourse to them, in order to supply the deficiencies of the other.

\* To this purpose, see also Essay I. at the end.



But the most pernicious of all taxes are those which are arbitrary. They are commonly converted, by their management, into punishments on industry; and also, by their unavoidable inequality, are more grievous than by the real burden which they impose. 'Tis surprising, therefore, to see them have place among any civilized people.

In general, all poll-taxes, even when not arbitrary, which they commonly are, may be esteemed dangerous: Because it is so easy for the sovereign to add a little more, and a little more, to the sum demanded, that these taxes are apt to become altogether oppressive and intolerable. On the other hand, a duty upon commodities checks itself; and a prince will soon find, that an increase of the impost is no increase of his revenue. It is not easy, therefore, for a people to be altogether ruined by such taxes.

Historians inform us, that one of the chief causes of the destruction of the ROMAN state, was the alteration which CONSTANTINE introduced into the finances, by substituting an universal poll-tax, in lieu of almost all the tithes, customs, and excises, which formerly composed the revenue of the *empire*. The people, in all the provinces, were so grinded and oppressed by the *publicans*, that they were glad to take refuge under the conquering arms of the barbarians; whose dominion, as they had fewer necessities, and less art, was found preferable to the refined tyranny of the ROMANS.

There is a prevailing opinion, that all taxes, however levied, fall upon the land at last. Such an opinion may be useful in BRITAIN, by checking the landed gentlemen, in whose hands our legislature is chiefly lodged, and making them preserve  
great

great regard for trade and industry. But I must confess, that this principle, though first advanced by a celebrated writer, has so little appearance of reason, that, were it not for his authority, it had never been received by any body. Every man, to be sure, is desirous of pushing off from himself the burden of any tax, which is imposed, and laying it upon others: But as every man has the same inclination, and is upon the defensive; no set of men can be supposed to prevail altogether in this contest. And why the landed gentleman should be the victim of the whole, and should not be able to defend himself, as well as others are, I cannot readily imagine. All tradesmen, indeed, would willingly prey upon him, and divide him among them, if they could: But this inclination they always have, though no taxes were levied; and the same methods, by which he guards against the imposition of tradesmen before taxes, will serve him afterwards, and make them share the burden with him. No labour in any commodities, that are exported, can be very considerably raised in the price, without losing the foreign market; and as some part of almost every manufactory is exported, this circumstance keeps the price of most species of labour nearly the same after the imposition of taxes. I may add, that it has this effect upon the whole: For were any kind of labour paid beyond its proportion, all hands would flock to it, and would soon sink it to a level with the rest.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that we have, with regard to taxes, an instance of what frequently happens in political institutions, that the consequences of things are diametrically opposite to what we should expect on the first appearance. 'Tis regarded as a fundamental maxim of the TURKISH government, That the *Grand Signior*, though absolute

lute master of the lives and fortunes of each individual, has no authority to impose a new tax; and every OTTOMAN prince, who has made such an attempt, either has been obliged to retract, or has found the fatal effects of his perseverance. One would imagine, that this prejudice or established opinion were the firmest barrier in the world against oppression; yet 'tis certain, that its effect is quite contrary. The emperor, having no regular method of increasing his revenue, must allow all the bashaws and governors to oppress and abuse the subjects: and these he squeezes after their return from their government. Whereas, if he could impose a new tax, like our EUROPEAN princes, his interest would so far be united with that of his people, that he would immediately feel the bad effects of these disorderly levies of money, and would find, that a pound, raised by general imposition, would have less pernicious effects, than a shilling taken in so unequal and arbitrary a manner.



## E S S A Y IX.

## OF PUBLIC CREDIT.

**I**T appears to have been the common practice of antiquity, to make provision, in times of peace, for the necessities of war, and to hoard up treasures before-hand, as the instruments either of conquest or defence; without trusting to extraordinary imposts, much less to borrowing, in times of disorder and confusion. Besides the immense sums above mentioned \*, which were amassed by ATHENS, and by the PTOLEMIES, and other successors of ALEXANDER; we learn from PLATO †, that the frugal LACEDEMONIANS had also collected a great treasure; and ARRIAN ‡ and PLUTARCH || specify the riches which ALEXANDER got possession of on the conquest of SUSA and ECBATANA, and which were reserved, some of them, from the time of Cyrus. If I remember right, the scripture also mentions the treasure of HEZEKIAH and the JEWISH princes; as profane history does that of PHILIP and PERSEUS, kings of MACEDON. The ancient republics of GAUL had commonly large sums in reserve §. Every one knows the trea-

\* Essay V.

† ALICIB. I.

‡ Lib. 3.

|| PLUT. *in vita* ALEX. He makes these treasures amount to 80,000 talents, or about 15 millions sterl. QUINTUS CURTIUS (Lib. 5. Cap. 2.) says, that ALEXANDER found in SUSA above 50,000 talents.

§ STRABO, Lib. 4.

ture seized in ROME by JULIUS CÆSAR, during the civil wars; and we find afterwards, that the wiser emperors, AUGUSTUS, TIBERIUS, VESPASIAN, SEVERUS, &c. always discovered the prudent foresight, of saving great sums against any public exigency.

On the contrary, our modern expedient, which has become very general, is to mortgage the public revenues, and to trust that posterity, during peace, will pay off the incumbrances contracted during the preceding war: And they, having before their eyes, so good an example of their wise fathers, have the same prudent reliance on their posterity; who, at last, from necessity more than choice, are obliged to place the same confidence in a new posterity. But not to waste time in declaiming against a practice which appears ruinous, beyond the evidence of an hundred demonstrations; it seems pretty apparent, that the ancient maxims are, in this respect, much more prudent than the modern; even though the latter had been confined within some reasonable bounds, and had ever, in any one instance, been attended with such frugality, in time of peace, as to discharge the debts incurred by an expensive war. For why should the case be so very different between the public and an individual, as to make us establish such different maxims of conduct for each? If the funds of the former be greater, its necessary expences are proportionably larger; if its resources be more numerous, they are not infinite; and as its frame should be calculated for a much longer duration, than the date of a single life, or even of a family, it should embrace maxims, large, durable, and generous, agreeable to the supposed extent of its existence. To trust to chances and tem-

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porary expedients, is, indeed, what the necessity of human affairs frequently reduces us to; but whoever voluntarily depend on such resources, have not necessity, but their own folly, to accuse for their misfortunes, when any such befall them.

If the abuses of treasures be dangerous, either by engaging the state in rash enterprizes, or making it neglect military discipline, in confidence of its riches; the abuses of mortgaging are more certain and inevitable; poverty, impotence, and subjection to foreign powers.

According to modern policy, war is attended with every destructive circumstance; loss of men, increase of taxes, decay of commerce, dissipation of money, devastation by sea and land. According to ancient maxims, the opening of the public treasure, as it produced an uncommon affluence of gold and silver, served as a temporary encouragement to industry, and attoned, in some degree, for the inevitable calamities of war.

What then shall we say to the new paradox, That public incumbrances are, of themselves, advantageous, independent of the necessity of contracting them; and that any state, even though it were not pressed by a foreign enemy, could not possibly have embraced a wiser expedient for promoting commerce and riches, than to create funds, and debts, and taxes, without limitation? Discourses, such as these, might naturally have passed for trials of wit among rhetoricians, like the panegyrics on folly and a fever, on BUSIRIS and NERO, had we not seen such absurd maxims patronized by great ministers, and by a whole party among us. And these puzzling arguments,



ments, (for they deserve not the name of specious) though they could not be the foundation of Lord ORFORD's conduct, for he had more sense; served at least to keep his partizans in countenance, and perplex the understanding of the nation.

Let us examine the consequences of public debts, both in our domestic management, by their influence on commerce and industry; and in our foreign transactions, by their effect on wars and negotiations.

There is a word, which is here in the mouth of every body, and which, I find, has also got abroad, and is much employed by foreign writers \*, in imitation of the ENGLISH; and this is, CIRCULATION. This word serves as an account of every thing; and though I confess, that I have sought for its meaning in the present subject, ever since I was a school-boy, I have never yet been able to discover it. What possible advantage is there which the nation can reap by the easy transference of stock from hand to hand? Or is there any parallel to be drawn from the circulation of other commodities, to that of chequer-notes and INDIA bonds? Where a manufacturer has a quick sale of his goods to the merchant, the merchant to the shopkeeper, the shopkeeper to his customers; this enlivens industry, and gives new encouragement to the first dealer or the manufacturer and all his tradesmen, and makes them produce more and better commodities of the same species. A stagnation is here pernicious, wherever it happens; because it operates backwards, and stops or benumbs the industrious hand in its production of what is useful to human life. But what production we owe to CHANGE-ALLEY, or even what consump-

\* MELON, DU TOT, LAW, in the pamphlets published in FRANCE.

tion, except that of coffee, and pen, ink, and paper, I have not yet learned; nor can one foresee the loss or decay of any one beneficial commerce or commodity, though that place and all its inhabitants were for ever buried in the ocean.

But though this term has never been explained by those who insist so much on the advantages that result from a circulation, there seems, however, to be some benefit of a similar kind, arising from our incumbrances: As indeed, what human evil is there, which is not attended with some advantage? This we shall endeavour to explain, that we may estimate the weight which we ought to allow it.

Public securities are with us become a kind of money, and pass as readily at the current price as gold or silver. Wherever any profitable undertaking offers itself, however expensive, there are never wanting hands enough to embrace it; nor need a trader, who has sums in the public stocks, fear to launch out into the most extensive trade; since he is possessed of funds, which will answer the most sudden demand that can be made upon him. No merchant thinks it necessary to keep by him any considerable cash. Bank-stock, or India-bonds, especially the latter, serve all the same purposes; because he can dispose of them, or pledge them to a banker, in a quarter of an hour; and at the same time they are not idle, even when in his *scri-  
toire*, but bring him in a constant revenue. In short, our national debts furnish merchants with a species of money, that is continually multiplying in their hands, and produces sure gain, besides the profits of their commerce. This must enable them to trade upon less profit. The small profit of the merchant renders the commodity cheaper, causes a greater consumption,

sumption, quickens the labour of the common people, and helps to spread arts and industry through the whole society.

There are also, we may observe, in ENGLAND, and in all states, which have both commerce and public debts, a set of men, who are half merchants, half stock-holders, and may be supposed willing to trade for small profits; because commerce is not their principal or sole support, and their revenues in the funds are a sure resource for themselves and their families. Were there no funds, great merchants would have no expedient for realizing or securing any part of their profit, but by making purchases of land; and land has many disadvantages in comparison of funds. Requiring more care and inspection, it divides the time and attention of the merchant; upon any tempting offer or extraordinary accident in trade, it is not so easily converted into money; and as it attracts, too much, both by the many natural pleasures it affords, and the authority it gives, it soon converts the citizen into the country gentleman. More men, therefore, with large stocks and incomes, may naturally be supposed to continue in trade, where there are public debts: and this, it must be owned, is of some advantage to commerce, by diminishing its profits, promoting circulation, and encouraging industry.

But, in opposition to these two favourable circumstances, perhaps of no very great importance, weigh the many disadvantages which attend our public debts, in the whole *interior* œconomy of the state: You will find no comparison between the ill and the good which result from them.

*First*, 'Tis certain, that national debts cause a mighty confluence of people and riches to the capital, by the great sums

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which are levied in the provinces to pay the interest of those debts; and perhaps, too, by the advantages in trade above mentioned, which they give the merchants in the capital above the rest of the kingdom. The question is, Whether, in our case, it be for the public interest, that so many privileges should be conferred on LONDON, which has already arrived at such an enormous size, and seems still encreasing? Some men are apprehensive of the consequences. For my part, I cannot forbear thinking, that though the head is undoubtedly too big for the body, yet that great city is so happily situated, that its excessive bulk causes less inconvenience than even a smaller capital to a great kingdom. There is more difference between the prices of all provisions in PARIS and LANGUEDOC, than between those in LONDON and YORKSHIRE.

*Secondly*, Public stocks, being a kind of paper-credit, have all the disadvantages attending that species of money. They banish gold and silver from the most considerable commerce of the state, reduce them to common circulation, and by that means render all provisions and labour dearer than otherwise they would be. We may also remark, that this increase of prices, derived from paper-credit, has a more durable and a more dangerous influence than when it arises from a great increase of gold and silver: Where an accidental overflow of money raises the price of labour and commodities, the evil remedies itself in a little time: The money soon flows out into all the neighbouring nations: The prices fall to a level: And industry may be continued as before; a relief, which cannot be expected, where the circulating specie consists chiefly of paper, and has no intrinsic value.

*Thirdly*, The taxes which are levied to pay the interests of these debts, are apt to be a check upon industry, to heighten the price of labour, and to be an oppression on the poorer sort.

*Fourthly*, As foreigners possess a share of our national funds, they render the public, in a manner, tributary to them, and may in time occasion the transport of our people and our industry.

*Fifthly*, The greatest part of public stock being always in the hands of idle people, who live on their revenue, our funds give great encouragement to an useless and inactive life.

But though the injury which arises to commerce and industry from our public funds, will appear, upon balancing the whole, very considerable, it is trivial, in comparison of the prejudice which results to the state considered as a body politic, which must support itself in the society of nations, and have various transactions with other states, in wars and negotiations. The ill, there, is pure and unmixed, without any favourable circumstance to atone for it; and 'tis an ill too of a nature the highest and most important.

We have, indeed, been told, that the public is no weaker upon account of its debts; since they are mostly due among ourselves, and bring as much property to one as they take from another. 'Tis like transferring money from the right hand to the left; which leaves the person neither richer nor poorer than before. Such loose reasonings and specious comparisons will always pass, where we judge not upon principles.

principles. I ask, Is it possible, in the nature of things, to overburthen a nation with taxes, even where the sovereign resides among them? The very doubt seems extravagant; since 'tis requisite in every commonwealth, that there be a certain proportion observed between the laborious and the idle part of it. But if all our present taxes be mortgaged, must we not invent new ones? And may not this matter be carried to a length that is ruinous and destructive?

In every nation, there are always some methods of levying money more easy than others, agreeable to the way of living of the people, and the commodities they make use of. In BRITAIN, the excises upon malt and beer afford a very large revenue; because the operations of malting and brewing are very tedious, and are impossible to be concealed; and at the same time, these commodities are not so absolutely necessary to life, as that the raising their price would very much affect the poorer sort. These taxes being all mortgaged, what difficulty to find new ones! what vexation and ruin of the poor!

Duties upon consumptions are more equal and easy than those upon possessions. What a loss to the public, that the former are all exhausted, and that we must have recourse to the more grievous method of levying taxes!

Were all the proprietors of land only stewards to the public, must not necessity force them to practise all the arts of oppression used by stewards, where the absence or negligence of the proprietor render them secure against enquiry?



It will scarce be asserted, that no bounds ought ever to be set to national debts; and that the public would be no weaker, were twelve or fifteen shillings in the pound, land-tax, mortgaged, with all the present customs and excises. There is something therefore in the case, beside the mere transferring of property from one hand to another. In 500 years, the posterity of those now in the coaches, and of those upon the boxes, will probably have changed places, without affecting the public by these revolutions.

Suppose the public once fairly brought to that condition, to which it is hastening with such amazing rapidity; suppose the land to be taxed eighteen or nineteen shillings in the pound; for it can never bear the whole twenty: suppose all the excises and customs to be screwed up to the utmost which the nation can bear, without entirely losing its commerce and industry; and suppose that all those funds are mortgaged to perpetuity, and that the invention and wit of all our projectors can find no new imposition which may serve as the foundation of a new loan; and let us consider the necessary consequences of this situation. Though the imperfect state of our political knowledge, and the narrow capacities of men make it difficult to foretel the effects which will result from any untried measure, the seeds of ruin are here scattered with such profusion as not to escape the eye of the most careless observer.

In this unnatural state of society, the only persons who possess any revenue, beyond the immediate effects of their industry, are the stock-holders, who draw almost all the rent of the land and houses, besides the produce of all the customs and excises. These are men, who have no connexions in the

state, who can enjoy their revenue in any part of the world in which they choose to reside, who will naturally bury themselves in the capital, or in great cities, and who will sink into the lethargy of a stupid and pampered luxury, without spirit, ambition, or enjoyment. Adieu to all ideas of nobility, gentry, and family. The stocks can be transferred in an instant, and being in such a fluctuating state, will seldom be transmitted during three generations from father to son. Or were they to remain ever so long in one family, they convey no hereditary authority or credit to the possessors; and by this means, the several ranks of men, which form a kind of independant magistracy in a state, instituted by the hand of nature, are entirely lost; and every man in authority derives his influence from the commission alone of the sovereign. No expedient remains for preventing or suppressing insurrections, but mercenary armies: No expedient at all remains for resisting tyranny: Elections are swayed by bribery and corruption alone: And the middle power between king and people being totally removed, a horrible despotism must infallibly prevail. The land-holders, despised for their poverty, and hated for their oppressions, will be utterly unable to make any opposition to it.

Though a resolution should be formed by the legislature never to impose any tax which hurts commerce and discourages industry, it will be impossible for men, in subjects of such extreme delicacy, to reason so justly as never to be mistaken, or amidst difficulties so urgent, never to be seduced from their resolution. The continual fluctuations in commerce require continual alterations in the nature of the taxes; which exposes the legislature every moment to the danger both of wilful and



involuntary error. And any great blow given to trade, whether by injudicious taxes or by other accidents, throws the whole system of the government into confusion.

But what expedient is the public now to fall upon, even supposing trade to continue in the most flourishing condition, to support its foreign wars and enterprizes, and to defend its own honour and interests or those of its allies? I do not ask how the public is to exert such a prodigious power as it has maintained during our late wars; where we have so much exceeded, not only our own natural strength, but even that of the greatest empires. This extravagance is the abuse complained of, as the source of all the dangers to which we are at present exposed. But since we must still suppose great commerce and opulence to remain, even after every fund is mortgaged; those riches must be defended by proportionable power, and whence is the public to derive the revenue which supports it? It must plainly be from a continual taxation of the annuitants, or which is the same thing, from mortgaging anew, on every exigency, a certain part of their annuity; and thus making them contribute to their own defence, and to that of the nation. But the difficulties, attending this system of policy, will easily appear, whether we suppose the king to have become absolute master, or to be still controuled by national councils, in which the annuitants themselves must necessarily bear the principal sway.

If the prince has become absolute, as may naturally be expected from this situation of affairs, it is so easy for him to encrease his exactions upon the annuitants, which amount

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only to the retaining money in his own hands, that this species of property will soon lose all its credit, and the whole income of every individual in the state must lie entirely at the mercy of the sovereign: A degree of despotism which no oriental monarchy has ever yet attained. If, on the contrary, the consent of the annuitants be requisite for every taxation, they will never be persuaded to contribute sufficiently even to the support of government; as the diminution of their revenue must in that case be very sensible, would not be disguised under the appearance of a branch of excise or customs, and would not be shared by any other order of the state, who are already supposed to be taxed to the utmost. There are instances, in some republics, of a hundredth penny, and sometimes of the fiftieth, being given to the support of the state; but this is always an extraordinary exertion of power, and can never become the foundation of a constant national defence. We have always found, where a government has mortgaged all its revenues, that it necessarily sinks into a state of languor, inactivity and impotence.

Such are the inconveniencies, which may reasonably be foreseen, of this situation, to which GREAT BRITAIN is visibly tending. Not to mention, the numberless inconveniencies, which cannot be foreseen, and which must result from so monstrous a situation as that of making the public the sole proprietor of land, besides investing it with every branch of customs and excise, which the fertile imagination of ministers and projectors have been able to invent.

I must confess, that there is a strange supineness, from long custom, crept into all ranks of men, with regard to  
public

public debts, not unlike what divines so vehemently complain of with regard to their religious doctrines. We all own, that the most sanguine imagination cannot hope, either that this or any future ministry will be possessed of such rigid and steady frugality; as to make any considerable progress in the payment of our debts; or that the situation of foreign affairs will, for any long time, allow them leisure and tranquillity for such an undertaking\*. *What then is to become of us?* Were we ever so good Christians, and ever so resigned to Providence; this, methinks, were a curious question, even considered as a speculative one, and what it might not be altogether impossible to form some conjectural solution of. The events here will depend little upon the contingencies of battles, negotiations, intrigues and factions. There seems to be a natural progress of things, which may guide our reasoning. As it would have required but a moderate share of prudence, when we first began this practice of mortgaging, to have foretold, from the nature of men and of ministers, that things would necessarily be carried to the length we see; so now, that they have at last happily reached it, it may not be difficult to guess at the consequences. It must, indeed, be one of these two events; either the nation must destroy public credit, or public credit will de-

\* In times of peace and security, when alone it is possible to pay debt, the monied interest are averse to receive partial payments, which they know not how to dispose of to advantage; and the landed interest are averse to continue the taxes requisite for that purpose. Why therefore should a minister persevere in a measure so disagreeable to all parties? For the sake, I suppose, of a posterity, which he will never see, or of a few reasonable reflecting people, whose united interest, perhaps, will not be able to secure him the smallest burrough in ENGLAND. 'Tis not likely we shall ever find any minister so bad a politician. With regard to these narrow destructive maxims of politics, all ministers are expert enough.

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stroy the nation. 'Tis impossible they can both subsist, after the manner they have been hitherto managed, in this, as well as in some other nations.

There was, indeed, a scheme for the payment of our debts, which was proposed by an excellent citizen, Mr. HUTCHINSON, above thirty years ago, and which was much approved of by some men of sense, but never was likely to take effect. He asserted, that there was a fallacy in imagining that the public owed this debt; for that really every individual owed a proportional share of it, and paid, in his taxes, a proportional share of the interest, beside the expences of levying these taxes. Had we not better, then, says he, make a proportional distribution of the debt among us, and each of us contribute a sum suitable to his property, and by that means discharge at once all our funds and public mortgages? He seems not to have considered, that the laborious poor pay a considerable part of the taxes by their annual consumptions, though they could not advance, at once, a proportional part of the sum required. Not to mention, that property in money and stock in trade might easily be concealed or disguised; and that visible property in lands and houses would really at last answer for the whole: An inequality and oppression which never would be submitted to. But though this project is never likely to take place; 'tis not altogether improbable, that when the nation become heartily sick of their debts, and are cruelly oppressed by them, some daring projector may arise with visionary schemes for their discharge. And as public credit will begin, by that time, to be a little frail, the least touch will destroy it,



as happened in FRANCE; and in this manner it will *die of the doctor* \*.

But 'tis more probable, that the breach of national faith will be the necessary effect of wars, defeats, misfortunes, and public calamities, or even perhaps of victories and conquests.

must confess, when I see princes and states fighting and quarrelling, amidst their debts, funds, and public mortgages, it always brings to my mind a match of cudgel-playing fought in a *China* shop. How can it be expected, that sovereigns will spare a species of property, which is pernicious to themselves and to the public, when they have so little compassion on lives and properties, which are useful to both? Let the time come (and surely it will come) when the new funds, created for the exigencies of the year, are not subscribed to, and raise not the money projected. Suppose, either that the cash of the nation is exhausted; or that our faith, which has been hitherto so ample, begins to fail us. Suppose, that, in this distress, the nation is threatened with an invasion; a rebellion,

\* Some neighbouring states practise an easy expedient, by which they lighten their public debts. The FRENCH have a custom (as the Romans formerly had) of augmenting their money; and this the nation has been so much familiarized to, that it hurts not public credit, though it be really cutting off at once, by an edict, so much of their debts. The DUTCH diminish the interest, without the consent of their creditors; or, which is the same thing, they arbitrarily tax the funds as well as other property. Could we practise either of these methods, we need never be oppressed by the national debt; and 'tis not impossible but one of these, or some other method, may, at all adventures, be tried, on the augmentation of our incumbrances and difficulties. But people in this country are so good reasoners upon whatever regards their interest, that such a practice will deceive no body; and public credit will probably tumble at once by so dangerous a trial.

is suspected or broke out at home; a squadron cannot be equipped for want of pay, victuals, or repairs; or even a foreign subsidy cannot be advanced. What must a prince or minister do in such an emergence? The right of self-preservation is unalienable in every individual, much more in every community. And the folly of our statesmen must then be greater than the folly of those who first contracted debt, or, what is more, than that of those who trusted, or continue to trust this security, if these statesmen have the means of safety in their hands, and do not employ them. The funds, created and mortgaged, will, by that time, bring in a large yearly revenue, sufficient for the defence and security of the nation: Money is perhaps lying in the exchequer, ready for the discharge of the quarterly interest: Necessity calls, fear urges, reason exhorts, compassion alone exclaims: The money will immediately be seized for the current service, under the most solemn protestations, perhaps, of being immediately replaced. But no more is requisite. The whole fabric, already tottering, falls to the ground, and buries thousands in its ruins. And this, I think, may be called the *natural death* of public credit: For to this period it tends as naturally as an animal body to its dissolution and destruction †.

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† So great dupes are the generality of mankind, that, notwithstanding such a violent shock to public credit, as a voluntary bankruptcy in ENGLAND would occasion, it would not probably be long, ere credit would again revive in as flourishing a condition as before. The present king of FRANCE, during the late war, borrowed money at lower interest than ever his grandfather did; and as low as the BRITISH parliament, comparing the natural rate of interest in both kingdoms. And though men are commonly more governed by what they have seen, than by what they foresee, with whatever certainty; yet promises, protestations, fair appearances, with

These two events, supposed above, are calamitous, but not the most calamitous. Thousands are hereby sacrificed to the safety of millions. But we are not without danger, that the contrary event may take place, and that millions may be sacrificed for ever to the temporary safety of thousands\*.

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with the allurements of present interest, have such powerful influence as few are able to resist. Mankind are, in all ages, caught by the same baits: The same tricks, played over and over again, still trepan them. The heights of popularity and patriotism are still the beaten road to power and tyranny; flattery to treachery; standing armies to arbitrary government; and the glory of God to the temporal interest of the clergy. The fear of an everlasting destruction of credit, allowing it to be an evil, is a needless bugbear. A prudent man, in reality, would rather lend to the public immediately after they had taken a sponge to their debts, than at present; as much as an opulent knave, even though one could not force him to pay, is a preferable debtor to an honest bankrupt: For the former, in order to carry on business, may find it his interest to discharge his debts, where they are not exorbitant: The latter has it not in his power. The reasoning of TACITUS, *Hist. lib. 3.* as it is eternally true, is very applicable to our present case. *Sed vulgus ad magnitudinem beneficiorum aderat: Stultissimus quisque pecuniis mercabatur: Apud sapientes cassa habebantur, quæ neque dari neque accipi, salva republica, poterant.* The public is a debtor, whom no man can oblige to pay. The only checks which the creditors have on it, is the interest of preserving credit; an interest, which may easily be overbalanced by a very great debt, and by a difficult and extraordinary emergence, even supposing that credit irrecoverable. Not to mention, that a present necessity often forces states into measures which are, strictly speaking, against their interest.

\* I have heard it has been computed, that all the creditors of the public, natives and foreigners, amount only to 17,000. These make a figure at present on their income; but, in case of a public bankruptcy, would, in an instant, become the lowest, as well as the most wretched of the people. The dignity and authority of the landed gentry and nobility is much better rooted; and would render the contention very unequal, if ever we come to that extremity. One would incline to assign to this event a very near period, such as half a century, had not our fathers' prophecies of this kind been already found fallacious, by the duration of



Our popular government, perhaps, will render it difficult or dangerous for a minister to venture on so desperate an expedient, as that of a voluntary bankruptcy. And though the house of Lords be altogether composed of the proprietors of lands, and the house of Commons chiefly; and consequently neither of them can be supposed to have great property in the funds: Yet the connections of the members may be so great with the proprietors, as to render them more tenacious of public faith, than prudence, policy, or even justice, strictly speaking, requires. And perhaps, too, our foreign enemies, or rather enemy (for we have but one to dread) may be so politic as to discover, that our safety lies in despair, and may not, therefore, show the danger, open and barefaced, till it be inevitable. The balance of power in EUROPE our grandfathers, our fathers, and we, have all justly esteemed too unequal to be preserved without our attention and assistance. But our children, weary with the struggle, and fettered with incumbrances, may sit down secure, and see their neighbours oppressed and conquered; till, at last, they themselves and their creditors lie both at the mercy of the conqueror. And this may properly enough be denominated the *violent death* of our public credit.

These seem to be the events which are not very remote, and which reason foresees as clearly almost as she can do any

our public credit, so much beyond all reasonable expectation. When the astrologers in FRANCE were every year foretelling the death of HENRY IV. *These fellows, says he, must be right at last.* We shall, therefore, be more cautious than to assign any precise date; and shall content ourselves with pointing out the event in general.

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thing that lies in the womb of time. And though the antients maintained that, in order to reach the gift of prophecy, a certain divine fury or madness was requisite, one may safely affirm, that, in order to deliver such prophecies as these, no more is necessary, than merely to be in one's senses, free from the influence of popular madness and delusion.

## E S S A Y X.

## OF SOME REMARKABLE CUSTOMS.

I SHALL observe three remarkable customs in three celebrated governments; and shall conclude from the whole, that all general maxims in politics ought to be established with great reserve; and that irregular and extraordinary appearances are frequently discovered in the moral, as well as in the physical world. The former, perhaps, we can better account for, after they happen, from springs and principles, of which every one has, within himself, or from obvious observation, the strongest assurance and conviction: But it is often fully as impossible for human prudence, beforehand, to foresee, and foretell them.

I. One would think it essential to every supreme council or assembly, which debates, that intire liberty of speech should be granted to every member, and that all motions or reasonings should be received, which can any way tend to illustrate the point under deliberation. One would conclude, with still greater assurance, that, after a motion was made, which was voted and approved by that assembly in which the legislative power is lodged, the member who made the motion must for ever be exempted from farther trial or inquiry. But no political maxim can, at first sight, appear more undisputable, than  
that



that he must, at least, be secured from all inferior jurisdiction; and that nothing less than the same supreme legislative assembly, in their subsequent meetings, could render him accountable for those motions and harangues which they had before approved of. But these axioms, however irrefragable they may appear, have all failed in the ATHENIAN government, from causes and principles too, which appear almost inevitable.

By the γραφή παρανομων, or *indictment of illegality*, (though it has not been remarked by antiquaries or commentators) any man was tried and punished by any common court of judicature, for any law which had passed upon his motion, in the assembly of the people, if that law appeared to the court unjust, or prejudicial to the public. Thus DEMOSTHENES, finding that ship-money was levied irregularly, and that the poor bore the same burden as the rich in equipping the galleys, corrected this inequality by a very useful law, which proportioned the expence to the revenue and income of each individual. He moved for this law in the assembly; he proved its advantages\*; he convinced the people, the only legislature in ATHENS; the law passed, and was carried into execution: And yet he was tried in a criminal court for that law, upon the complaint of the rich, who resented the alteration he had introduced into the finances†. He was indeed acquitted, upon proving anew the usefulness of his law.

CTESIPHON moved in the assembly of the people, that particular honours should be conferred on DEMOSTHENES, as on a citizen affectionate and useful to the commonwealth: The

\* His harangue for it is still extant; *περὶ Σομμοριῶν*.

† PRO CTESIPHONTE.

people,

people, convinced of this truth, voted those honours: Yet was CTESIPHON tried by the γραφή παρανομών. It was asserted, among other topics, that DEMOSTHENES was not a good citizen, nor affectionate to the commonwealth: And the orator was called upon to defend his friend, and consequently himself; which he executed by that sublime piece of eloquence that has ever since been the admiration of mankind.

After the battle of CHÆRONEA, a law was passed upon the motion of HYPERIDES, giving liberty to slaves, and inrolling them in the troops †. On account of this law, the orator was afterwards tried by the indictment above mentioned, and defended himself, among other topics, by that stroke celebrated by PLUTARCH and LONGINUS. *It was not I, said he, that moved for this law: It was the necessities of war; It was the battle of CHÆRONEA.* The orations of DEMOSTHENES abound with many instances of trials of this nature, and prove clearly, that nothing was more commonly practised.

The ATHENIAN Democracy was such a tumultuary government, as we can scarce form a notion of in the present age of the world. The whole collective body of the people voted in every law, without any limitation of property, without any distinction of rank, without controul from any magistracy or senate ‡; and consequently without regard to order, justice,

† PLUTARCHUS in *vita decem oratorum*. DEMOSTHENES gives a different account of this law. *Contra ARISTOGITON. orat. II.* He says, That its purport was, to render the ἀτιμοὶ ἐπιτιμοί, or to restore the privilege of bearing offices to those who had been declared incapable. Perhaps these were both clauses of the same law.

‡ The senate of the Bean was only a less numerous mob, chosen by lot from among the people; and their authority was not great.

or prudence. The ATHENIANS soon became sensible of the mischiefs attending this constitution: But being averse to the checking themselves by any rule or restriction, they resolved, at least, to check their demagogues or counsellors, by the fear of future punishment and inquiry. They accordingly instituted this remarkable law; a law esteemed so essential to their government, that ÆSCHINES insists on it as a known truth, that were it abolished or neglected, it were impossible for the Democracy to subsist\*.

The people feared not any ill consequence to liberty from the authority of the criminal courts; because these were nothing but very numerous juries, chosen by lot from among the people. And they considered themselves justly as in a state of perpetual pupillage; where they had an authority, after they came to the use of reason, not only to retract and controul whatever had been determined, but to punish any guardian for measures which they had embraced by his persuasion. The same law had place in THEBES†; and for the same reason.

It appears to have been an usual practice in ATHENS, on the establishment of any law esteemed very useful or popular, to prohibit for ever its abrogation and repeal. Thus the demagogue, who diverted all the public revenues to the support of

\* In CTESIPHONTEM. 'Tis remarkable, that the first step after the dissolution of the Democracy by CRITIAS and the Thirty, was to annul the *νόμον παρανομον*, as we learn from DEMOSTHENES *κατα Τυπον*. The orator in this oration gives us the words of the law, establishing the *νόμον παρανομον*, pag. 297. *ex edit. ALDI.* And he accounts for it, from the same principles we here reason upon.

† PLUT. *in vita PELOP.*



shows and spectacles, made it criminal so much as to move for a repeal of this law \*. Thus LEPTINES moved for a law, not only to recal all the immunities formerly granted, but to deprive the people for the future of the power of granting any more †. Thus all bills of attainder ‡ were forbid, or laws that affected one ATHENIAN, without extending to the whole commonwealth. These absurd clauses, by which the legislature vainly attempted to bind itself for ever, proceeded from an universal sense of the levity and inconstancy of the people.

II. A wheel within a wheel, such as we observe in the GERMAN empire, is considered by Lord SHAFTESBURY || as an absurdity in politics: But what must we say to two equal wheels, which govern the same political machine, without any mutual check, controul, or subordination; and yet preserve the greatest harmony and concord? To establish two distinct legislatures, each of which possesses full and absolute authority within itself, and stands in no need of the other's assistance, in order to give validity to its acts; this may appear, beforehand, altogether impracticable, as long as men are actuated by the passions of ambition, emulation, and avarice, which have been hitherto their chief governing principles. And should I assert, that the state I have in my eye was divided into two distinct factions, each of which predominated in a distinct legislature, and yet produced no clashing

\* DEMOST. *Olynth.* 1, 2. † DEMOST. *contra* LEPT.

‡ DEMOST. *contra* ARISTOCRATEM.

|| Essay on the freedom of wit and humour, part 3, § 2.

in these independent powers; the supposition may appear almost incredible. And if, to augment the paradox, I should affirm, that this disjointed, irregular government, was the most active, triumphant, and illustrious commonwealth, that ever yet appeared on the stage of the world; I should certainly be told, that such a political chimera was as absurd as any vision of the poets. But there is no need for searching long, in order to prove the reality of the foregoing suppositions: For this was actually the case with the ROMAN republic.

The legislative power was there lodged in the *comitia centuriata* and *comitia tributa*. In the former, 'tis well known, the people voted according to their *census*; so that when the first class was unanimous, though it contained not, perhaps, the hundredth part of the commonwealth, it determined the whole; and, with the authority of the senate, established a law. In the latter, every vote was alike; and as the authority of the senate was not there requisite, the lower people entirely prevailed, and gave law to the whole state. In all party-divisions, at first between the PATRICIANS and PLEBEIANS, afterwards between the nobles and the people, the interest of the Aristocracy was predominant in the first legislature; that of the Democracy in the second: The one could always destroy what the other had established: Nay, the one, by a sudden and unforeseen motion, might take the start of the other, and totally annihilate its rival, by a vote, which, from the nature of the constitution, had the full authority of a law. But no such contest or struggle is observed in the history of ROME: No instance of a quarrel between these

two legislatures; though many between the parties that governed in each. Whence arose this concord, which may seem so extraordinary?

The legislature established at ROME, by the authority of SERVIUS TULLIUS, was the *comitia centuriata*, which, after the expulsion of the kings, rendered the government, for some time, altogether aristocratical. But the people, having numbers and force on their side, and being elated with frequent conquests and victories in their foreign wars, always prevailed when pushed to extremities, and first extorted from the senate the magistracy of the tribunes, and then the legislative power of the *comitia tributa*. It then behoved the nobles to be more careful than ever not to provoke the people. For beside the force which the latter were always possessed of, they had now got possession of legal authority, and could instantly break in pieces any order or institution which directly opposed them. By intrigue, by influence, by money, by combination, and by the respect paid their character, the nobles might often prevail, and direct the whole machine of government: But had they openly set their *comitia centuriata* in opposition to the *tributa*, they had soon lost the advantage of that institution, together with their consuls, prætors, ediles, and all the magistrates elected by it. But the *comitia tributa*, not having the same reason for respecting the *centuriata*, frequently repealed laws favourable to the Aristocracy: they limited the authority of the nobles, protected the people from oppression, and controlled the actions of the senate and magistracy. The *centuriata* found it convenient always to submit; and though equal in authority, yet being inferior in

8 power,



power, durst never directly give any shock to the other legislature, either by repealing its laws, or establishing laws, which, it foresaw, would soon be repealed by it.

No instance is found of any opposition or struggle between these *comitia*; except one slight attempt of this kind, mentioned by APPIAN in the third book of his civil wars. MARK ANTHONY, resolving to deprive DECIMUS BRUTUS of the government of CISALPINE GAUL, railed in the *Forum*, and called one of the *comitia*, in order to prevent the meeting of the other, which had been ordered by the senate. But affairs were then fallen into such confusion, and the ROMAN constitution was so near its final dissolution, that no inference can be drawn from such an expedient. This contest, besides, was founded more on form than party. It was the senate who ordered the *comitia tributa*, that they might obstruct the meeting of the *centuriata*, which, by the constitution, or at least forms of the government, could alone dispose of provinces.

CICERO was recalled by the *comitia centuriata*, though banished by the *tributa*, that is, by a *plebiscitum*. But his banishment, we may observe, never was considered as a legal deed, arising from the free choice and inclination of the people. It was always ascribed to the violence alone of CLODIUS, and to the disorders introduced by him into the government.

III. The *third* custom which we proposed to observe, regards ENGLAND; and though it be not so important as those

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which we have pointed out in ATHENS and ROME, it is no less singular and remarkable. 'Tis a maxim in politics, which we readily admit as undisputed and universal, That a power, however great, when granted by law to an eminent magistrate, is not so dangerous to liberty, as an authority, however inconsiderable, which he acquires from violence and usurpation. For, besides that the law always limits every power which it bestows, the very receiving it as a concession establishes the authority whence it is derived, and preserves the harmony of the constitution. By the same right that one prerogative is assumed without law, another may also be claimed, and another, with still greater facility; while the first usurpations both serve as precedents to the following, and give force to maintain them. Hence the heroism of HAMPDEN, who sustained the whole violence of royal prosecution, rather than pay a tax of twenty shillings not imposed by parliament; hence the care of all ENGLISH patriots to guard against the first encroachments of the crown; and hence alone the existence, at this day, of ENGLISH liberty.

There is, however, one occasion, where the parliament has departed from this maxim; and that is, in the *pressing of seamen*. The exercise of an illegal power is here tacitly permitted in the crown; and though it has frequently been under deliberation, how that power might be rendered legal, and granted under proper restrictions to the sovereign, no safe expedient could ever be proposed for that purpose, and the danger to liberty always appeared greater from law than from usurpation. While this power is exercised to no other end than to man the navy, men willingly submit to it, from a sense  
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of its use and necessity; and the sailors, who are alone affected by it, find no body to support them, in claiming the rights and privileges which the law grants, without distinction, to all ENGLISH subjects. But were this power, on any occasion, made an instrument of faction or ministerial tyranny, the opposite faction, and indeed all lovers of their country, would immediately take the alarm, and support the injured party; the liberty of ENGLISHMEN would be asserted; juries would be implacable; and the tools of tyranny, acting both against law and equity, would meet with the severest vengeance. On the other hand, were the parliament to grant such an authority, they would probably fall into one of these two inconveniencies: They would either bestow it under so many restrictions as would make it lose its effects, by cramping the authority of the crown; or they would render it so large and comprehensive, as might give occasion to great abuses, for which we could, in that case, have no remedy. The very illegality of the power, at present, prevents its abuses, by affording so easy a remedy against them.

I pretend not, by this reasoning, to exclude all possibility of contriving a register for seamen, which might man the navy, without being dangerous to liberty. I only observe, that no satisfactory scheme of that nature has yet been proposed. Rather than adopt any project hitherto invented, we continue a practice seemingly the most absurd and unaccountable. Authority, in times of full internal peace and concord, is armed against law. A continued and open usurpation of the crown is permitted, amidst the greatest jealousy and watchfulness in the people; nay, proceeding from those very principles:



principles: Liberty, in a country of the highest liberty, is left intirely to its own defence, without any countenance or protection: The wild state of nature is renewed, in one of the most civilized societies of mankind: And great violences and disorders among the people, the most humane and the best natured, are committed with impunity; while the one party pleads obedience to the supreme magistrate, the other the sanction of fundamental laws.

## E S S A Y XI.

OF THE POPULOUSNESS OF ANTIENT  
NATIONS\*.

THERE is very little ground, either from reason or experience, to conclude the universe eternal or incorruptible. The continual and rapid motion of matter, the violent revolutions with which every part is agitated, the changes remarked in the heavens, the plain traces as well as tradition of an universal deluge; all these prove strongly the mortality of this fabric of the world, and its passage, by corruption or dissolution, from one state or order to another. It must, therefore, as well as each individual form which it contains, have its infancy, youth, manhood, and old age;

\* An ingenious writer has honoured this discourse with an answer, full of politeness, erudition, and good sense. So learned a refutation would have made the author suspect, that his reasonings were entirely overthrown, had he not used the precaution, from the beginning, to keep himself on the sceptical side; and having taken this advantage of the ground, he was enabled, though with much inferior forces, to preserve himself from a total defeat. That Reverend gentleman will always find, where his antagonist is so entrenched, that it will be difficult to force him. VARRO, in such a situation, could defend himself against HANNIBAL, PHARNACES against CÆSAR. The author, however, very willingly acknowledges, that his antagonist has detected many mistakes both in his authorities and reasonings; and it was owing entirely to that gentleman's indulgence, that many more errors were not remarked. In this edition, advantage has been taken of his learned animadversions, and the Essay has been rendered less imperfect than formerly.

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and 'tis probable, that in all these variations, man, equally with every animal and vegetable, will partake. In the flourishing age of the world, it may be expected, that the human species should possess greater vigour both of mind and body, more prosperous health, higher spirits, longer life, and a stronger inclination and power of generation. But if the general system of things, and human society of course, have any such gradual revolutions, they are too slow to be discernible in that short period which is comprehended by history and tradition. Stature and force of body, length of life, even courage and extent of genius, seem hitherto to have been, naturally in all ages, pretty much the same. The arts and sciences, indeed, have flourished in one period, and have decayed in another : But we may observe, that at the time when they rose to greatest perfection among one people, they were perhaps totally unknown to all the neighbouring nations ; and though they universally decayed in one age, yet in a succeeding generation they again revived, and diffused themselves over the world. As far, therefore, as observation reaches, there is no universal difference discernible in the human species ; and though it were allowed, that the universe, like an animal body, had a natural progress from infancy to old age ; yet as it must still be uncertain whether, at present, it be advancing to its point of perfection, or declining from it, we cannot thence presuppose any decay in human nature†. To prove, there-

† COLUMELLA says, lib. 3. cap. 8. that in ÆGYPT and AFRICA the bearing of twins was frequent, and even customary ; *gemini partus familiares, ac pæne solennes sunt*. If this was true, there is a physical difference both in countries and ages. For travellers make no such remarks of these countries at present. On the contrary, we are apt to suppose the northern nations more fertile. As those two countries were provinces of the ROMAN empire, 'tis difficult, though not altogether absurd, to suppose that such a man as COLUMELLA might be mistaken with regard to them.

fore,



fore, or account for the greater populoufness of antiquity, by the imaginary youth or vigour of the world, will scarce be admitted by any just reasoner. These *general physical* causes ought entirely to be excluded from that question.

There are indeed some more *particular physical* causes of great importance. Diseases are mentioned in antiquity, which are almost unknown to modern medicine; and new diseases have arisen and propagated themselves, of which there are no traces in antient history. And in this particular we may observe, upon comparison, that the disadvantage is very much on the side of the moderns. Not to mention some others of less importance; the small-pox commits such ravages, as would almost alone account for the great superiority ascribed to antient times. The tenth or the twelfth part of mankind, destroyed every generation, should make a vast difference, it may be thought, in the numbers of the people; and when joined to venereal distempers, a new plague diffused every where, this disease is perhaps equivalent, by its constant operation, to the three great scourges of mankind, war, pestilence, and famine. Were it certain, therefore, that antient times, were more populous than the present, and could no moral causes be assigned for so great a change; these physical causes alone, in the opinion of many, would be sufficient to give us satisfaction on that head.

But is it certain, that antiquity was so much more populous as is pretended? The extravagancies of VOSSIUS, with regard to this subject, are well known. But an author of much greater genius and discernment has ventured to affirm, that, according to the best computations which these subjects will

admit of, there are not now, on the face of the earth, the fiftieth part of mankind, which existed in the time of JULIUS CÆSAR \*. It may easily be observed, that the comparisons, in this case, must be very imperfect, even though we confine ourselves to the scene of antient history; EUROPE, and the nations about the MEDITERRANEAN. We know not exactly the numbers of any EUROPEAN kingdom, or even city, at present: How can we pretend to calculate those of antient cities and states, where historians have left us such imperfect traces? For my part, the matter appears to me so uncertain, that, as I intend to throw together some reflections on that head, I shall intermingle the inquiry concerning *causes* with that concerning *facts*; which ought never to be admitted, where the facts can be ascertained with any tolerable assurance. We shall, *first*, consider whether it be probable, from what we know of the situation of society in both periods, that antiquity must have been more populous; *secondly*, whether in reality it was so. If I can make it appear, that the conclusion is not so certain as is pretended, in favour of antiquity, 'tis all I aspire to.

In general, we may observe, that the question with regard to the comparative populousness of ages or kingdoms implies very important consequences, and commonly determines concerning the preference of their whole police, their manners, and the constitution of their government. For as there is in all men, both male and female, a desire and power of generation, more active than is ever universally exerted, the restraints which they lie under, must proceed from some difficulties in

\* *Lettres PERSANES.* See also *L'Esprit de Loix*, liv. 23. cap. 17, 18, 19.

their situation, which it belongs to a wise legislature carefully to observe and remove. Almost every man who thinks he can maintain a family will have one; and the human species, at this rate of propagation, would more than double every generation. How fast do mankind multiply in every colony or new settlement; where it is an easy matter to provide for a family; and where men are nowise straitened or confined, as in long established governments? History tells us frequently of plagues, which have swept away the third or fourth part of a people: Yet in a generation or two, the destruction was not perceived; and the society had again acquired their former number. The lands which were cultivated, the houses built, the commodities raised, the riches acquired, enabled the people who escaped, immediately to marry, and to rear families, which supplied the place of those who had perished †. And for a like reason, every wise, just, and mild government, by rendering the condition of its subjects easy and secure, will always abound most in people, as well as in commodities and riches. A country, indeed, whose climate and soil are fitted for vines, will naturally be more populous than one which produces only corn, and that more populous than one which is only fitted for pasturage. But if every thing else be equal, it seems natural to expect, that where-ever there are most happiness and virtue, and the wisest institutions, there will also be most people.

The question, therefore, concerning the populousness of antient and modern times, being allowed of great importance,

† This too is a good reason why the small-pox does not depopulate countries so much as may at first sight be imagined. Where there is room for more people, they will always arise, even without the assistance of naturalization bills. 'Tis remarked by Don GERONIMO DE USTARIZ, that the provinces of SPAIN, which send most people to the INDIES, are most populous; which proceeds from their superior riches.



it will be requisite, if we would bring it to some determination, to compare both the *domestic* and *political* situation of these two periods, in order to judge of the facts by their moral causes; which is the *first* view in which we proposed to consider them.

The chief difference between the *domestic* oeconomy of the antients and that of the moderns consists in the practice of slavery, which prevailed among the former, and which has been abolished for some centuries throughout the greatest part of EUROPE. Some passionate admirers of the antients, and zealous partizans of civil liberty, (for these sentiments, as they are both of them, in the main, extremely just, are found to be almost inseparable) cannot forbear regretting the loss of this institution; and whilst they brand all submission to the government of a single person with the harsh denomination of slavery, they would gladly reduce the greatest part of mankind to real slavery and subjection. But to one who considers coolly on the subject, it will appear, that human nature, in general, really enjoys more liberty at present, in the most arbitrary governments of EUROPE, than it ever did during the most flourishing period of antient times. As much as submission to a petty prince, whose dominions extend not beyond a single city, is more grievous than obedience to a great monarch; so much is domestic slavery more cruel and oppressive than any civil subjection whatsoever. The more the master is removed from us in place and rank, the greater liberty we enjoy; the less are our actions inspected and controled; and the fainter that cruel comparison becomes between our own subjection, and the freedom, and even dominion of another. The remains that are found of slavery, in the AMERICAN colonies,

colonies, and among some EUROPEAN nations, would never surely create a desire of rendering it more universal. The little humanity commonly observed in persons accustomed, from their infancy, to exercise so great authority over their fellow-creatures, and to trample upon human nature, were sufficient alone to disgust us with that authority. Nor can a more probable reason be given for the severe, I might say, barbarous, manners of antient times, than the practice of domestic slavery; by which every man of rank was rendered a petty tyrant, and educated amidst the flattery, submission, and low debasement of his slaves.

According to the antient practice, all checks were on the inferior, to restrain him to the duty of submission; none on the superior, to engage him to the reciprocal duties of gentleness and humanity. In modern times, a bad servant finds not easily a good master, nor a bad master a good servant; and the checks are mutual, fuitable to the inviolable and eternal laws of reason and equity.

The custom of exposing old, useless, or sick slaves in an island of the TYBER, there to starve, seems to have been pretty common in ROME; and whoever recovered, after having been so exposed, had his liberty given him, by an edict of the emperor CLAUDIUS; where it was likewise forbid to kill any slave merely for old age or sickness\*. But supposing that this edict was strictly obeyed, would it better the domestic treatment of slaves, or render their lives much more comfortable? We may imagine what others would practise, when it was the professed maxim of the elder CATO, to sell his super-

\* SUTTONIUS in vita CLAUDII.

annuated slaves for any price, rather than maintain what he esteemed an ufeless burthen †.

The *ergastula*, or dungeons, where slaves in chains were forced to work, were very common all over ITALY. COLUMELLA ‡ advises, that they be always built under ground; and recommends || it as the duty of a careful overseer, to call over every day the names of these slaves, like the mustering of a regiment or ship's company, in order to know presently when any of them had deserted. A proof of the frequency of these *ergastula*, and of the great number of slaves usually confined in them.

A chained slave for a porter was usual in ROME, as appears from OVID †, and other authors §. Had not these people shaken off all sense of compassion towards that unhappy part of their species, would they have presented all their friends, at the first entrance, with such an image of the severity of the master, and misery of the slave?

Nothing so common in all trials, even of civil causes, as to call for the evidence of slaves; which was always extorted by the most exquisite torments. DEMOSTHENES says\*, that where it was possible to produce, for the same fact, either freemen or slaves as witnesses, the judges always preferred the torturing of slaves, as a more certain and infallible evidence †.

† PLUT. in vita CATONIS.

‡ LIB. I. cap. 6.

|| Id. lib. II. cap. I.

† Amor. lib. I. eleg. 6.

§ SÜETON. de claris rhetor. So also the antient poet. *Janitoris tintinnare impedimenta audio.*

\* In Oniteram orat. I.

† The same practice was common in ROME; but CICERO seems not to think this evidence so certain as the testimony of free-citizens. *Pro Cælio.*



SENECA draws a picture of that disorderly luxury, which changes day into night, and night into day, and inverts every stated hour of every office in life. Among other circumstances, such as displacing the meals and times of bathing, he mentions, that regularly about the third hour of the night, the neighbours of one who indulges this false refinement, hear the noise of whips and lashes; and, upon enquiry, find that he is then taking an account of the conduct of his servants, and giving them due correction and discipline. This is not remarked as an instance of cruelty, but only of disorder, which, even in actions the most usual and methodical, changes the fixed hours that an established custom had assigned them ‡.

But our present business is only to consider the influence of slavery on the populousness of a state. 'Tis pretended, that, in this particular, the antient practice had infinitely the advantage, and was the chief cause of that extreme populousness which is supposed in those times. At present, all masters discourage the marrying of their male servants, and admit not by any means the marriage of the female, who are then supposed alto-

‡ *Epist.* 122. The inhuman sports exhibited at ROME, may justly be considered too as an effect of the people's contempt for slaves, and was also a great cause of the general inhumanity of their princes and rulers. Who can read the accounts of the amphitheatrical entertainments without horror? Or who is surprized, that the emperors should treat that people in the same way the people treated their inferiors? One's humanity, on that occasion, is apt to renew the barbarous wish of CALIGULA, that the people had but one neck. A man could almost be pleased, by a single blow, to put an end to such a race of monsters. You may thank God, says the author above cited, (*epist.* 7.) addressing himself to the ROMAN people, that you have a master, (*viz.* the mild and the merciful NERO) who is incapable of learning cruelty from your example. This was spoke in the beginning of his reign: But he fitted them very well afterwards; and no doubt was considerably improved by the sight of the barbarous objects, to which he had, from his infancy, been accustomed.

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gether incapacitated for their service. But where the property of the servants is lodged in the master, their marriage and fertility form his riches, and bring him a succession of slaves, that supply the place of those whom age and infirmity have disabled. He encourages, therefore, their propagation as much as that of his cattle; rears the young with the same care; and educates them to some art or calling, which may render them more useful or valuable to him. The opulent are, by this policy, interested in the being at least, though not the well-being of the poor; and enrich themselves, by encreasing the number and industry of those who are subjected to them. Each man, being a sovereign in his own family, has the same interest with regard to it, as the prince with regard to the state; and has not, like the prince, any opposite motive of ambition or vain-glory, which may lead him to depopulate his little sovereignty. All of it is, at all times, under his eye; and he has leisure to inspect the most minute detail of the marriage and education of his subjects†.

Such are the consequences of domestic slavery, according to the first aspect and appearance of things: But if we enter more deeply into the subject, we shall perhaps find reason to retract our hasty determinations. The comparison is shocking between the management of human creatures and that of cattle; but being extremely just, when applied to the present subject,

† We may here observe, that if domestic slavery really increased populousness, it would be an exception to the general rule, that the happiness of any society and its populousness are necessary attendants. A master, from humour or interest, may make his slaves very unhappy, and yet be careful from interest, to increase their number. Their marriage is not a matter of choice with them, no more than any other action of their life.

it may be proper to trace the consequences of it. At the capital, near all great cities, in all populous, rich, industrious provinces, few cattle are bred. Provisions, lodging, attendance, labour, are there dear; and men find better their account in buying the cattle, after they come to a certain age, from the remoter and cheaper countries. These are consequently the only breeding countries for cattle; and by a parity of reason, for men too, when the latter are put on the same footing with the former. To rear a child in LONDON till he could be serviceable, would cost much dearer, than to buy one of the same age from SCOTLAND or IRELAND; where he had been raised in a cottage, covered with rags, and fed on oatmeal or potatoes. Those who had slaves, therefore, in all the richer and more populous countries, would discourage the pregnancy of the females, and either prevent or destroy the birth. The human species would perish in those places where it ought to increase the fastest; and a perpetual recruit be made from all the poorer and more desert provinces. Such a continued drain would tend mightily to depopulate the state, and render great cities ten times more destructive than with us; where every man is master of himself, and provides for his children from the powerful instinct of nature, not the calculations of sordid interest. If LONDON, at present, without increasing, needs a yearly recruit from the country, of 5000 people, as is commonly computed; what must it require, if the greatest part of the tradesmen and common people were slaves, and were hindered from breeding by their avaricious masters?

All antient authors tell us, that there was a perpetual flux of slaves to ITALY from the remoter provinces, particularly



SYRIA, CILICIA\*, CAPPADOCIA, and the Lesser ASIA, THRACE, and ÆGYPT: Yet the number of people did not increase in ITALY; and writers complain of the continual decay of industry and agriculture†. Where then is that extreme fertility of the ROMAN slaves, which is commonly supposed? So far from multiplying, they could not, it seems, so much as keep up the stock, without immense recruits. And tho' great numbers were continually manumitted, and converted into ROMAN citizens, the numbers even of these did not increase‡, till the freedom of the city was communicated to foreign provinces.

The term for a slave born and bred in the family, was *verna* ||; and these slaves seem to have been intitled by custom to

\* Ten thousand slaves in a day have been often sold for the use of the ROMANS, at DELUS in CILICIA. STRABO, lib. 14.

† COLUMELLA, lib. 1. *proem.* et cap. 2. et 7. VARRO, lib. 3. cap. 1. HORAT. lib. 2. od. 15. TACIT. *annal.* lib. 3. cap. 54. SUTTON. *in vita* AUG. cap. 42. PLIN. lib. 18. cap. 13.

‡ *Minore indies plebe ingenua*, says TACITUS, *ann.* lib. 24. cap. 7.

|| As *servus* was the name of the genus, and *verna* of the species, without any correlative, this forms a strong presumption, that the latter were by far the least numerous. 'Tis an universal observation which we may form upon language, that where two related parts of a whole bear any proportion to each other, in numbers, rank or consideration, there are always correlative terms invented, which answer to both the parts, and express their mutual relation. If they bear no proportion to each other, the term is only invented for the less, and marks its distinction from the whole. Thus *man* and *woman*, *master* and *servant*, *father* and *son*, *prince* and *subject*, *stranger* and *citizen*, are correlative terms. But the words, *seaman*, *carpenter*, *smith*, *tailor*, &c. have no correspondent terms, which express those who are no seaman, no carpenter, &c. Languages differ very much with regard to the particular words where this distinction obtains; and may thence afford very strong inferences, concerning the manners and customs of different nations. The military government of the ROMAN emperors had exalted

to privileges and indulgences beyond others; a sufficient reason why the masters would not be fond of rearing many of that kind\*. Whoever is acquainted with the maxims of our planters, will acknowledge the justness of this observation†.

ATTICUS is much praised by his historian for the care which he took in recruiting his family from the slaves born in it‡; May we not thence infer, that that practice was not then very common?

The names of slaves in the GREEK comedies, SYRUS, MYSUS, GETA, THRAX, DAVUS, LYDUS, PHRYX, &c. afford a presumption, that at ATHENS, at least, most of the slaves were imported from foreign nations. The ATHENIANS, says

exalted the soldiery so high, that they balanced all the other orders of the state: Hence *miles* and *paganus* became relative terms; a thing, till then, unknown to ancient, and still so to modern languages. Modern superstition has exalted the clergy so high, that they overbalance the whole state: Hence *clergy* and *laity* are terms opposed in all modern languages; and in these alone. And from the same principles I infer, that if the number of slaves bought by the ROMANS from foreign countries, had not extremely exceeded those bred at home, *verna* would have had a correlative, which would have expressed the former species of slaves. But these, it would seem, composed the main body of the ancient slaves, and the latter were but a few exceptions.

\* *Verna* is used by the ROMAN writers as a word equivalent to *scurra*, on account of the petulance and impudence of those slaves. MART. lib. 1. ep. 42. HORACE also mentions the *vernæ procaces*; and PETRONIUS, cap. 24. *vernula urbanitas*. SENECA, *de provid.* cap. 1. *vernularum licentia*.

† It is computed in the WEST INDIES, that a stock of slaves grow worse five per cent. every year, unless new slaves be bought to recruit them. They are not able to keep up their number, even in those warm countries, where cloaths and provisions are so easily got. How much more must this happen in EUROPEAN countries, and in or near great cities.

‡ CORN. NEPOS in vita ATTICI. We may remark, that ATTICUS's estate lay chiefly in EPIRUS, which being a remote, desolate place, would render it profitable for him to rear slaves there.

STRABO †, gave to their slaves, either the names of the nations whence they were bought, as LYDUS, SYRUS; or the names of that were most common among those nations, as MANES or MIDAS to a PHRYGIAN, TIBIAS to a PAPHLAGONIAN.

DEMOSTHENES, after having mentioned a law which forbid any man to strike the slave of another, praises the humanity of this law; and adds that if the barbarians from whom slaves were bought had information that their countrymen met with such gentle treatment, they would entertain a great esteem for the ATHENIANS ‡. ISOCRATES † too insinuates, that the slaves of the GREEKS were generally or very commonly barbarians. ARISTOTLE in his Politics || plainly supposes, that a slave is always a foreigner. The ancient comic writers represented the slaves as speaking a barbarous language §. This was an imitation of nature.

'Tis well known that DEMOSTHENES, in his nonage, had been defrauded of a large fortune by his tutors, and that afterwards he recovered, by a prosecution at law, the value of his patrimony. His orations, on that occasion, still remain, and contain a very exact detail of the whole substance left by his father \*, in money, merchandise, houses, and slaves, together with the value of each particular. Among the rest were 52 slaves, handicraftsmen, viz. 32 sword-cutlers, and 20 cabinet makers †; all males; not a word of any wives, children or

† Lib. 7.

‡ In the MIDIAM, p. 221. ex edit. ALDI.

‡ Panegyr.

|| Lib. 7. cap. 10. sub. fin.

§ ARISTOPH. Equites, l. 17. The ancient scholiast remarks on this passage βαρβαρῶν ὡς δαλῶν.

\* In *Amphobum orat.* 1.

† ἀνομοιοί, makers of those beds which the ancients lay upon at meals.



family, which they certainly would have had, had it been a common custom at ATHENS to breed from the slaves: And the value of the whole must have depended very much on that circumstance. No female slaves are even so much as mentioned, except some house-maids, who belonged to his mother. This argument has great force, if it be not altogether decisive.

Consider this passage of PLUTARCH †, speaking of the Elder CATO. “ He had a great number of slaves, whom he  
 “ took care to buy at the sales of prisoners of war; and he  
 “ chose them young, that they might easily be accustomed to  
 “ any diet or manner of life, and be instructed in any business  
 “ or labour, as men teach any thing to young dogs or horses.  
 “ —And esteeming love the chief source of all disorders, he  
 “ allowed the male slaves to have a commerce with the female  
 “ in his family, upon paying a certain sum for this privilege:  
 “ But he strictly forbid all intrigues out of his family.” Are there any symptoms in this narration of that care which is supposed in the antients, of the marriage and propagation of their slaves? If that was a common practice, founded on general interest, it would surely have been embraced by CATO, who was a great œconomist, and lived in times when the antient frugality and simplicity of manners were still in credit and reputation.

It is expressly remarked by the writers of the ROMAN law, that scarce any ever purchase slaves with a view of breeding from them\*.

Our

† In vita CATONIS.

\* “ Non temere ancillæ ejus rei causa comparantur ut pariant.” *Digest.* lib. 5. tit. 3. de hæred. petit. lex 27. The following texts are to the same purpose. “ Spado-

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Our lackeys and house-maids, I own, do not serve much to multiply their species: But the antients, besides those who attended on their person, had all their labour performed by slaves, who lived, many of them, in their family; and some great men possessed to the number of 10,000. If there be any suspicion, therefore, that this institution was unfavourable to propagation, (and the same reason, at least in part, holds with regard to antient slaves as well as modern servants) how destructive must slavery have proved?

History mentions a ROMAN nobleman, who had 400 slaves under the same roof with him: And having been assassinated at home by the furious revenge of one of them, the law was executed with rigour, and all without exception were put to death †. Many other ROMAN noblemen had families equally, or more numerous; and I believe every one will allow, that

“nem morbosum non esse, neque vitiosum, verius mihi videtur; sed sanum esse, sicuti illum qui unum testiculum habet, qui etiam generare potest.” *Digest. lib. 2. tit. 1. de ædilitio edicto, lex 6. §. 2.* “Sin autem quis ita spado sit, ut tam necessaria pars corporis penitus absit, morbosus est.” *Id. lex 7.* His impotence, it seems, was only regarded so far as his health or life might be affected by it. In other respects, he was full as valuable. The same reasoning is employed with regard to female slaves. “Quæritur de ea muliere quæ semper mortuos parit, an morbosa sit? et ait Sabinus, si vulvæ vitio hoc contingit, morbosam esse.” *Id. lex 14.* It has even been doubted, whether a woman pregnant was morbid or vitiated; and it is determined, that she is sound, not on account of the value of her offspring, but because it is the natural part or office of women to bear children. “Si mulier pregnantis venerit, inter omnes convenit sanam eam esse, Maximum enim ac præcipuum munus feminarum accipere ac tueri conceptum. Puerperam quoque sanam esse; si modo nihil extrinsecus accedit, quod corpus ejus in aliquam valetudinem immitteret. De sterili Cælius distinguere Trebatium dicit, ut si natura sterilis sit, sana sit; si vitio corporis, contra.” *Id.*

† TACIT. *ann. lib. 14. cap. 43.*

this

this would scarce be practicable, were we to suppose all the slaves married, and the females to be breeders\*.

So early as the poet HESIOD †, married slaves, whether male or female, were esteemed very inconvenient. How much more, where families had increased to such an enormous size, as in ROME, and where simplicity of manners was banished from all ranks of people?

XENOPHON in his Oeconomics, where he gives directions for the management of a farm, recommends a strict care and attention of laying the male and the female slaves at a distance from each other. He seems not to suppose that they are ever married. The only slaves among the GREEKS that appear to have continued their own breed, were the HELOTES, who had houses apart, and were more the slaves of the public than of individuals ‡.

The same author § tells us, that NICIAS's overseer, by agreement with his master, was obliged to pay him an obolus a day for each slave; besides maintaining them, and keeping up the number. Had the antient slaves been all breeders, this last circumstance of the contract had been superfluous.

The antients talk so frequently of a fixed, stated portion of provisions assigned to each slave ||, that we are naturally led to

\* The slaves in the great houses, had little rooms assigned them, called *cellæ*. Whence the name of cell was transferred to the monks room in a convent. See farther on this head, JUST. LIPSIVS, Saturn. 1. cap. 14. These form strong presumptions against the marriage and propagation of the family slaves.

† Opera et Dies, lib. 2. l. 24. also l. 220.

‡ STRABO, lib. 8.

§ De ratione reddituum.

|| See CATO de re rustica, cap. 56. Donatus in Phormion, l. 1. 9. SENECAE epist. 80.



conclude, that slaves lived almost all single, and received that portion as a kind of board-wages.

The practice, indeed, of marrying the slaves seems not to have been very common, even among the country-labourers, where it is more naturally to be expected. CATO \*, enumerating the slaves requisite to labour a vineyard of a hundred acres, makes them to amount to 15; the overseer and his wife, *villicus* and *villica*, and 13 male slaves; for an olive plantation of 240 acres, the overseer and his wife, and 11 male slaves; and so in proportion to a greater or less plantation or vineyard.

VARRO †, citing this passage of CATO, allows his computation to be just in every respect, except the last. For as it is requisite, says he, to have an overseer and his wife, whether the vineyard or plantation be great or small, this must alter the exactness of the proportion. Had CATO's computation been erroneous in any other respect, it had certainly been corrected by VARRO, who seems fond of discovering so trivial an inaccuracy.

The same author ‡, as well as COLUMELLA §, recommends it as requisite to give a wife to the overseer, in order to attach him the more strongly to his master's service. This was therefore a peculiar indulgence granted to a slave, in whom so great a confidence was reposed.

In the same place VARRO mentions it as an useful precaution, not to buy too many slaves from the same nations, lest they

\* De re rust. cap. 10, 11.

† Lib. 1. cap. 17.

‡ Lib. 1. cap. 18.

§ Lib. 1. cap. 18.

beget factions and seditions in the family: A presumption that in ITALY the greatest part, even of the country labouring slaves, (for he speaks of no other) were bought from the remoter provinces. All the world knows, that the family-slaves in ROME, who were instruments of shew and luxury, were commonly imported from the east. *Hoc profecere*, says PLINY, speaking of the jealous care of masters, *mancipiorum legiones, et in domo turba externa ac servorum quoque causa nomenclator adhibendus* \*.

It is indeed recommended by VARRO †, to propagate young shepherds in the family from the old ones. For as grasing farms were commonly in remote and cheap places, and each shepherd lived in a cottage apart, his marriage and increase were not liable to the same inconveniencies as in dearer places, and where many servants lived in a family; which was universally the case in such of the ROMAN farms as produced wine or corn. If we consider this exception with regard to the shepherds, and weigh the reasons of it, it will serve for a strong confirmation of all our foregoing suspicions ‡.

COLUMELLA ||, I own, advises the master to give a reward, and even liberty to a female slave, that had reared him above three children: A proof, that sometimes the antients propagated from their slaves; which, indeed, cannot be denied. Were it otherwise, the practice of slavery, being so common in antiquity, must have been destructive to a degree which no

\* Lib. 33. cap. 1. So likewise TACITUS, *annal.* lib. 14. cap. 44.

† Lib. 2. cap. 10.

‡ *Pastoris duri est hic filius, ille bubulci.* JUVEN. *sat.* 11. 151.

|| Lib. 1. cap. 8.

expedient could repair. All I pretend to infer from these reasonings, is, that slavery is in general disadvantageous both to the happiness and populousness of mankind, and that its place is much better supplied by the practice of hired servants.

The laws, or, as some writers call them, the seditions of the GRACCHI, were occasioned by their observing the increase of slaves all over ITALY, and the diminution of free citizens. APPIAN \* ascribes this increase to the propagation of the slaves; PLUTARCH † to the purchasing of barbarians, who were chained and imprisoned, βαρβαρικά δεσμωτήρια ‡. 'Tis to be presumed that both causes concurred.

SICILY, says FLORUS ||, was full of *ergastula*, and was cultivated by labourers in chains. EUNUS and ATHENIO excited the servile war, by breaking up these monstrous prisons, and giving liberty to 60,000 slaves. The younger POMPEY augmented his army in SPAIN by the same expedient §. If the country-labourers, throughout the ROMAN empire,

\* De bel. civ. lib. 1.

† In vita TIB. & C. GRACCHI.

‡ To the same purpose is that passage of the elder SENECA, ex controversia 5. lib. 5. "Arata quondam populis rura, singulorum ergastulorum sunt: latiusque nunc villici, quam olim rages, imperant. At nunc eadem," says PLINY, "vincti pedes, damnatae manus, inscripti vultus exercent." lib. 18. cap. 3. So also MARTIAL.

"Et sonet innumera compede Thuscus ager." lib. 9. ep. 23.

And LUCAN.

"Tum longos jungere fines

Agrorum, et quondam duro fulcata Camilli,

Vomere et antiqua Curiorum passa ligones,

Longa sub ignotis extendere rura colonis. lib. 1.

Vincto foffore coluntur

Hesperiae fegetes.—

lib. 7.

|| Lib. 3. cap. 19.

§ Id. lib. 4. cap. 8.



were so generally in this situation, and if it was difficult or impossible to find separate lodgings for the families of the city-servants, how unfavourable to propagation, as well as to humanity, must the institution of domestic slavery be esteemed?

CONSTANTINOPLE, at present, requires the same recruits of slaves from all the provinces, which ROME did of old; and these provinces are of consequence far from being populous.

EGYPT, according to Mons. MAILLET, sends continual colonies of black slaves to the other parts of the TURKISH empire; and receives annually an equal return of white: The one brought from the inland parts of AFRICA, the other from MINGRELIA, CIRCASSIA, and TARTARY.

Our modern convents are, no doubt, very bad institutions: But there is reason to suspect, that antiently every great family in ITALY, and probably in other parts of the world, was a species of convent. And though we have reason to detest all those popish institutions, as nurseries of the most abject superstition, burthensome to the public, and oppressive to the poor prisoners, male as well as female; yet may it be questioned whether they be so destructive to the populousness of a state as is commonly imagined. Were the land which belongs to a convent, bestowed on a nobleman, he would spend its revenue on dogs, horses, grooms, footmen, cooks, and house-maids; and his family would not furnish many more citizens than the convent.

The common reason why parents thrust their daughters into nunneries, is, that they may not be over-burthened with too numerous a family; but the antients had a method almost as

innocent, and more effectual to that purpose, *viz.* the exposing their children in the earliest infancy. This practice was very common; and is not mentioned by any author of those times with the horror it deserves, or scarce \* even with disapprobation. PLUTARCH, the humane, good-natured PLUTARCH †, recommends it as a virtue in ATTALUS, king of PERGAMUS, that he murdered, or, if you will, exposed all his own children, in order to leave his crown to the son of his brother, EUMENES; signalizing in this manner his gratitude and affection to EUMENES, who had left him his heir preferable to that son. It was SOLON, the most celebrated of the sages of GREECE, who gave parents permission by law to kill their children ‡.

Shall we then allow these two circumstances to compensate each other, *viz.* monastic vows and the exposing of children, and to be unfavourable, in equal degrees, to the propagation of mankind? I doubt the advantage is here on the side of antiquity. Perhaps, by an odd connection of causes, the barbarous practice of the antients might rather render those times more populous. By removing the terrors of too numerous a family it would engage many people in marriage; and such is the force of natural affection, that very few, in comparison, would have resolution enough to carry into execution their former intentions.

CHINA, the only country where this cruel practice of exposing children prevails at present, is the most populous coun-

\* TACITUS blames it. De morib. Germ.

† De fraterno amore. SENECA also approves of the exposing of sickly, infirm children. De ira, lib. 1. cap. 15.

‡ SEXT. EMP. lib. 3. cap. 24.

try we know ; and every man is married before he is twenty. Such early marriages could scarce be general, had not men the prospect of so easy a method of getting rid of their children. I own, that PLUTARCH \* speaks of it as a very universal maxim of the poor to expose their children ; and as the rich were then averse to marriage, on account of the courtship they met with from those who expected legacies from them, the public must have been in a bad situation between them †.

Of all sciences there is none, where first appearances are more deceitful than in politics. Hospitals for foundlings seem favourable to the increase of numbers ; and, perhaps, may be so, when kept under proper restrictions. But when they open the door to every one, without distinction, they have probably a contrary effect, and are pernicious to the state. 'Tis computed, that every ninth child born at PARIS, is sent to the hospital ; though it seems certain, according to the common course of human affairs, that 'tis not a hundredth part whose parents are altogether incapacitated to rear and educate them. The infinite difference, for health, industry, and morals,

\* De amore prolis.

† The practice of leaving great sums of money to friends, though one had near relations, was common in GREECE as well as ROME ; as we may gather from LUCIAN. This practice prevails much less in modern times ; and BEN. JOHNSON'S VOLPONE is therefore almost entirely extracted from antient authors, and suits better the manners of those times.

It may justly be thought, that the liberty of divorces in ROME was another discouragement to marriage. Such a practice prevents not quarrels from *humour*, but rather increases them ; and occasions also those from *interest*, which are much more dangerous and destructive. See farther on this head, Essays moral, political, and literary, Part I. Essay XIX. Perhaps too the unnatural lusts of the antients ought to be taken into consideration, as of some moment.

[between



between an education in an hospital and that in a private family, should induce us not to make the entrance into an hospital too easy and engaging. To kill one's own child is shocking to nature, and must therefore be pretty unusual; but to turn over the care of him upon others is very tempting to the natural indolence of mankind.

Having considered the domestic life and manners of the ancients, compared to those of the moderns; where, in the main, we seem rather superior, so far as the present question is concerned; we shall now examine the *political* customs and institutions of both ages, and weigh their influence in retarding or forwarding the propagation of mankind.

Before the increase of the ROMAN power, or rather till its full establishment, almost all the nations which are the scene of ancient history, were divided into small territories or petty commonwealths, where of course a great equality of fortune prevailed, and the centre of the government was always very near its frontiers.

This was the situation of affairs not only in GREECE and ITALY, but also in SPAIN, GAUL, GERMANY, AFRIC, and a great part of the Lesser ASIA. And it must be owned, that no institution could be more favourable to the propagation of mankind. For though a man of an overgrown fortune, not being able to consume more than another, must share it with those who serve and attend him; yet their possession being precarious, they have not the same encouragement to marriage, as if each had a small fortune, secure and independent. Enormous cities are, besides, destructive to society, beget vice and disorder

disorder of all kinds, starve the remoter provinces, and even starve themselves, by the prices to which they raise all provisions. Where each man had his little house and field to himself, and each county had its capital, free and independent; what a happy situation of mankind! How favourable to industry and agriculture; to marriage and propagation! The prolific virtue of men, were it to act in its full extent, without that restraint which poverty and necessity imposes on it, would double the number every generation: And nothing surely can give it more liberty, than such small commonwealths, and such an equality of fortune among the citizens. All small states naturally produce equality of fortune, because they afford no opportunities of great increase; but small commonwealths much more, by that division of power and authority which is essential to them.

When XENOPHON \* returned after the famous expedition with CYRUS, he hired himself and 6000 of the GREEKS into the service of SEUTHES, a prince of THRACE; and the articles of his agreement were, that each soldier should receive a *daric* a month, each captain two *darics*, and he himself, as general, four: A regulation of pay which would not a little surprize our modern officers.

DEMOSTHENES and ÆSCHINES, with eight more, were sent ambassadors to PHILIP of MACEDON, and their appointments for above four months were a thousand *drachmas*, which is less than a *drachma* a day for each ambassador †. But a *drachma* a day, nay sometimes two ‡, was the pay of a common foot-soldier.

\* *De exp. Cyr.* lib. 7.

† DEMOST. *de falsa leg.* He calls it a considerable sum.

‡ THUCID. lib. 3.

A centurion among the ROMANS had only double pay to a private man, in POLYBIUS's time\*, and we accordingly find the gratuities after a triumph regulated by that proportion†. But MARK ANTHONY and the triumvirate gave the centurions five times the reward of the other‡. So much had the increase of the commonwealth increased the inequality among the citizens§.

It must be owned, that the situation of affairs in modern times, with regard to civil liberty, as well as equality of fortune, is not near so favourable, either to the propagation or happiness of mankind. EUROPE is shared out mostly into great monarchies; and such parts of it as are divided into small territories, are commonly governed by absolute princes, who ruin their people by a mimicry of the greater monarchs, in the splendor of their court and number of their forces. SWISSERLAND alone and HOLLAND resemble the antient republics; and though the former is far from possessing any advantage either of soil, climate, or commerce, yet the numbers of people, with which it abounds, notwithstanding their inlisting themselves into every service in EUROPE, prove sufficiently the advantages of their political institutions.

The antient republics derived their chief or only security from the numbers of their citizens. The TRACHINIANS having lost great numbers of their people, the remainder, in-

\* Lib. 6. cap. 37.

† TIT. LIV. lib. 41. cap. 7. 13. *& alibi passim.*

‡ APPIAN. *De bell. civ.* lib. 4.

§ CÆSAR gave the centurions ten times the gratuity of the common soldiers, *De bell. Gallico*, lib. 8. In the RHODIAN cartel, mentioned afterwards, no distinction in the ransom was made on account of ranks in the army.



stead of enriching themselves by the inheritance of their fellow-citizens, applied to SPARTA, their metropolis, for a new stock of inhabitants. The SPARTANS immediately collected ten thousand men; among whom the old citizens divided the lands of which the former proprietors had perished\*.

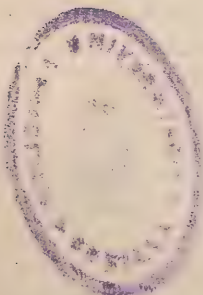
After TIMOLEON had banished DIONYSIUS from SYRACUSE, and had settled the affairs of SICILY, finding the cities of SYRACUSE and SELLINUNTUM extremely depopulated by tyranny, war, and faction, he invited over from GREECE some new inhabitants to repeople them†. Immediately forty thousand men (PLUTARCH ‡ says sixty thousand) offered themselves; and he distributed so many lots of land among them, to the great satisfaction of the antient inhabitants: A proof at once of the maxims of antient policy, which affected populousness more than riches; and of the good effects of these maxims, in the extreme populousness of that small country, GREECE, which could at once supply so large a colony. The case was not much different with the ROMANS in early times. He is a pernicious citizen, said M. CURIUS, who cannot be contented with seven acres§. Such ideas of equality could not fail of producing great numbers of people.

\* DIOD. SIC. lib. 12. THUCYD. lib. 3.

† DIOD. SIC. lib. 16. ‡ *In vita TIMOL.*

§ PLIN. lib. 18. cap. 3. The same author, in cap. 6. says, *Verumque potentibus latifundia perdidere ITALIAM; jam vero et provincias. Sex domi semissem AFRICÆ possidebant, cum interfecit eos NERO princeps.* In this view, the barbarous butchery committed by the first ROMAN emperors, was not, perhaps, so destructive to the public as we may imagine. These never ceased till they had extinguished all the illustrious families, which had enjoyed the plunder of the world, during the latter ages of the republic. The new nobles who rose in their place, were less splendid, as we learn from TACIT. *ann.* lib. 3. cap. 55.

We must now consider what disadvantages the antients lay under with regard to populousness, and what checks they received from their political maxims and institutions. There are commonly compensations in every human condition; and though these compensations be not always perfectly equal, yet they serve, at least, to restrain the prevailing principle. To compare them and estimate their influence, is indeed very difficult, even where they take place in the same age, and in neighbouring countries: But where several ages have intervened, and only scattered lights are afforded us by antient authors; what can we do but amuse ourselves by talking, *pro* and *con*, on an interesting subject, and thereby correcting all hasty and violent determinations?



*First*, We may observe, that the antient republics were almost in perpetual war; a natural effect of their martial spirit, their love of liberty, their mutual emulation, and that hatred which generally prevails among nations that live in a close neighbourhood. Now, war in a small state is much more destructive than in a great one; both because all the inhabitants, in the former case, must serve in the armies; and because the state is all frontier, and all exposed to the inroads of the enemy.

The maxims of antient war were much more destructive than those of modern; chiefly by the distribution of plunder, in which the soldiers were indulged. The private men in our armies are such a low set of people, that we find any abundance beyond their simple pay, breeds confusion and disorder, and a total dissolution of discipline. The very wretchedness and meanness of those who fill the modern armies, render them less destructive

destructive to the countries which they invade: One instance, among many, of the deceitfulness of first appearances in all political reasonings\*.

Antient battles were much more bloody by the very nature of the weapons employed in them. The antients drew up their men 16 or 20, sometimes 50 men deep, which made a narrow front; and it was not difficult to find a field, in which both armies might be marshalled, and might engage with each other. Even where any body of the troops was kept off by hedges, hillocks, woods, or hollow ways, the battle was not so soon decided between the contending parties, but that the others had time to overcome the difficulties which opposed them, and take part in the engagement. And as the whole armies were thus engaged, and each man closely buckled to his antagonist, the battles were commonly very bloody, and great slaughter was made on both sides, especially on the vanquished. The long thin lines required by fire-arms, and the quick decision of the fray, render our modern engagements but partial rencounters, and enable the general, who is foiled in the beginning of the day, to draw off the greatest part of his army, sound and intire. Could FOLARD's project of the column take place (which seems impracticable†) it would render modern battles as destructive as the antient.

\* The antient soldiers, being free citizens, above the lowest rank, were all married. Our modern soldiers are either forced to live unmarried, or their marriages turn to small account towards the increase of mankind. A circumstance which ought, perhaps, to be taken into consideration, as of some consequence in favour of the antients.

† What is the advantage of the column after it has broke the enemy's line? only, that it then takes them in flank, and dissipates whatever stands near it by a fire from all sides. But till it has broke them, does it not present a flank to the enemy, and that exposed to their musquetry, and, what is much worse, to their cannon?



The battles of antiquity, both by their duration, and their resemblance of single combats, were wrought up to a degree of fury quite unknown to latter ages. Nothing could then engage the combatants to give quarter, but the hopes of profit, by making slaves of their prisoners. In civil wars, as we learn from TACITUS \*, the battles were the most bloody, because the prisoners were not slaves.

What a stout resistance must be made, where the vanquished expected so hard a fate! How inveterate the rage, where the maxims of war were, in every respect, so bloody and severe!

Instances are very frequent, in antient history, of cities besieged, whose inhabitants, rather than open their gates, murdered their wives and children, and rushed themselves on a voluntary death, sweetened perhaps with a little prospect of revenge upon the enemy. GREEKS †, as well as BARBARIANS, have been often wrought up to this degree of fury. And the same determined spirit and cruelty must, in many other instances, less remarkable, have been extremely destructive to human society, in those petty commonwealths, which lived in a close neighbourhood, and were engaged in perpetual wars and contentions.

Sometimes the wars in GREECE, says PLUTARCH ‡, were carried on intirely by inroads, and robberies, and piracies.

\* Hist. lib. 2. cap. 44.

† As ABYDUS, mentioned by LIVY, lib. 31. cap. 17. 18. and POLYB. lib. 16. As also the XANTHIANS, APPIAN. *de bell. civil.* lib. 4.

‡ *In vita ARATI.*

Such a method of war must be more destructive, in small states, than the bloodiest battles and sieges.

By the laws of the twelve tables, possession for two years formed a prescription for land; one year for moveables \*: An indication, that there was not in ITALY, during that period, much more order, tranquillity, and settled police, than there is at present among the TARTARS.

The only cartel I remember in antient history, is, that between DEMETRIUS POLIORCETES and the RHODIANS; when it was agreed, that a free citizen should be restored for 1000 *drachmas*, a slave bearing arms for 500 †.

But, *secondly*, it appears that antient manners were more unfavourable than the modern, not only in times of war, but also in those of peace; and that too in every respect, except the love of civil liberty and equality, which is, I own, of considerable importance. To exclude faction from a free government, is very difficult, if not altogether impracticable; but such inveterate rage between the factions, and such bloody maxims, are found, in modern times, amongst religious parties alone, where bigotted priests are the accusers, judges, and executioners. In antient history, we may always observe, where one party prevailed, whether the nobles or people (for I can observe no difference in this respect ‡) that they immediately

\* INST. lib. 2. cap. 6. 'Tis true, the same Law seems to have been continued till the time of JUSTINIAN. But abuses introduced by barbarism, are not always corrected by civility.

† DIOD. SICUL. lib. 20.

‡ LYSIAS, who was himself of the popular faction, and very narrowly escaped from the thirty tyrants, says that the Democracy was as violent a government as the Oligarchy. *Orat. 24. de statu populi.*

butchered all of the opposite party who fell into their hands, and banished such as had been so fortunate as to escape their fury. No form of process, no law, no trial, no pardon. A fourth, a third, perhaps near a half of the city, were slaughtered, or expelled, every revolution; and the exiles always joined foreign enemies, and did all the mischief possible to their fellow citizens; till fortune put it in their power to take full revenge by a new revolution. And as these were very frequent in such violent governments, the disorder, diffidence, jealousy, enmity, which must prevail, are not easy for us to imagine in this age of the world.

There are only two revolutions I can recollect in antient history, which passed without great severity, and great effusion of blood in massacres and assassinations, *viz.* the restoration of the ATHENIAN Democracy by THRASYBULUS, and the subduing the ROMAN republic by CÆSAR. We learn from antient history, that THRASYBULUS passed a general amnesty for all past offences; and first introduced that word, as well as practice into GREECE\*. It appears, however, from many orations of LYSIAS†, that the chief, and even some of the subaltern offenders, in the preceding tyranny, were tried, and capitally punished. This is a difficulty not cleared up, and even not observed by antiquarians and historians. And as to CÆSAR's clemency, though much celebrated, it would not gain great applause in the present age. He butchered, for instance, all CATO's senate, when he became master of UTICA‡;

\* CICEO, PHILIP. 1.

† ASORAT II. contra ERATOST. orat. 12. contra AGORAT. orat. 15. pro MANTITH.

‡ APPIAN. de bell. civ. lib. 2.



and these, we may readily believe, were not the most worthless of the party. All those who had borne arms against that usurper, were forfeited; and, by HIRTIUS's law, declared incapable of all public offices.

These people were extremely fond of liberty; but seem not to have understood it very well. When the thirty tyrants first established their dominion at ATHENS, they began with seizing all the sycophants and informers, who had been so troublesome during the Democracy, and putting them to death by an arbitrary sentence and execution. *Every man, says SALLUST \** and LYSIAS † *rejoiced at these punishments*; not considering, that liberty was from that moment annihilated.

The utmost energy of the nervous style of THUCYDIDES, and the copiousness and expression of the GREEK language, seem to sink under that historian, when he attempts to describe the disorders which arose from faction throughout all the GREEK commonwealths. You would imagine, that he still labours with a thought greater than he can find words to communicate. And he concludes his pathetic description with an observation, which is at once very refined and very solid. "In these contests," says he, "those who were dullest and most stupid, and had the least foresight, commonly prevailed. For being conscious of this weakness, and dreading to be over-reached by those of greater penetration, they went to work hastily, without premeditation, by the sword and

\* See CÆSAR's speech, *de bell. Catil.*

† *Orat.* 24. And in *orat.* 29. he mentions the factious spirit of the popular assemblies as the only cause why these illegal punishments should displease.

"poinard,

“poinard, and thereby prevented their antagonists, who were  
“forming fine schemes and projects for their destruction\*.”

Not to mention DIONYSIUS † the elder, who is computed to have butchered in cold blood above 10,000 of his fellow-citizens; nor AGATHOCLES ‡, NABIS §, and others, still more bloody than he; the transactions, even in free governments, were extremely violent and destructive. At ATHENS, the thirty tyrants and the nobles, in a twelvemonth, murdered, without trial, about 1200 of the people, and banished above the half of the citizens that remained ||. In ARGOS, near the same time, the people killed 1200 of the nobles; and afterwards their own demagogues, because they had refused to carry their prosecutions farther \*\*. The people also in CORCYRA killed 1500 of the nobles, and banished a thousand †. These numbers will appear the more surprising, if we consider the extreme smallness of these states. But all antient history is full of such instances ||.

When

\* Lib. 3. The country in EUROPE in which I have observed the factions to be most violent, and party-hatred the strongest, is IRELAND. This goes so far as to cut off even the most common intercourse of civilities between the Protestants and Catholics. Their cruel insurrections, and the severe revenges which they have taken of each other, are the causes of this mutual ill will, which is the chief source of the disorder, poverty, and depopulation of that country. The GREEK factions I imagine to have been inflamed still to a higher degree of rage; the revolutions being commonly more frequent, and the maxims of assassination much more avowed and acknowledged.

† PLUT. *de vir.* & *fert.* ALEX.

‡ DIOD. SIC. lib. 18, 19.

§ TIT. LIV. lib. 31, 33, 34.

|| DIOD. SIC. lib. 14. ISOCRATES says there were only 5000 banished. He makes the number of those killed amount to 1500. ARROP. ÆSCHINES *contra* CTESIPH. assigns precisely the same number. SENECA (*de tranquill. anim.* cap. 5.) says 1300.

\*\* DIOD. SIC. lib. 15.

† DIOD. SIC. lib. 13.

|| We shall mention from DIODORUS SICULUS alone a few, which passed in the course of sixty years during the most shining age of GREECE. There were banished from

When ALEXANDER ordered all the exiles to be restored through all the cities; it was found, that the whole amounted to 20,000 men †; the remains probably of still greater slaughters and massacres. What an astonishing multitude in so narrow a country as antient GREECE! And what domestic-confusion, jealousy, partiality, revenge, heart-burnings, must tear those cities, where factions were wrought up to such a degree of fury and despair!

from SYBARIS 500 of the nobles and their partisans; lib. 12. p. 77. *ex edi.* RHODOMANNI. Of CHIANS, 600 citizens banished; lib. 13. p. 189. At EPHEBUS, 340 killed, 1000 banished; lib. 13. p. 223. Of CYRENIANS, 500 nobles killed, all the rest banished; lib. 14. p. 263. The CORINTHIANS killed 120; banished 500; lib. 14. p. 304. PHÆBIDAS the SPARTAN banished 300 BÆOTIANS; lib. 15. p. 342. Upon the fall of the LACEDÆMONIANS, Democracies were restored in many cities, and severe vengeance taken of the nobles, after the GREEK manner. But matters did not end there. For the banished nobles, returning in many places, butchered their adversaries at PHIALÆ, in CORINTH, in MEGARA, in PHLIASIA. In this last place they killed 300 of the people; but these again revolting, killed above 600 of the nobles and banished the rest; lib. 15. p. 357. In ARCADIA 1400 banished, besides many killed. The banished retired to SPARTA and to PALLANTIUM: The latter delivered up to their countrymen, and all killed, lib. 15. p. 373. Of the banished from ARGOS and THEBES, there were 500 in the SPARTAN army; *id.* p. 374. Here is a detail of the most remarkable of AGATHOCLES's cruelties from the same author. The people before his usurpation had banished 600 nobles; lib. 19. p. 655. Afterwards that tyrant, in concurrence with the people, killed 4000 nobles, and banished 6000; *id.* p. 647. He killed 4000 people at GELA; *id.* p. 741. By AGATHOCLES's brother 8000 banished from SYRACUSE; lib. 20. p. 757. The inhabitants of ÆGESTA, to the number of 40,000, were killed, man, woman, and child; and with tortures, for the sake of their money; *id.* p. 801. All the relations, *viz.* father, brother, children, grandfather, of his LIBYAN army, killed; *id.* p. 103. He killed 7000 exiles after capitulation; *id.* p. 816. 'Tis to be remarked, that AGATHOCLES was a man of great sense and courage: His violent tyranny, therefore, is a stronger proof of the manners of the age.

† DIOD. SIC. lib. 18.



It would be easier, says ISOCRATES to PHILIP, to raise an army in GREECE at present from the vagabonds than from the cities.

Even where affairs came not to such extremities (which they failed not to do almost in every city twice or thrice every century) property was rendered very precarious by the maxims of antient government. XENOPHON, in the banquet of SOCRATES, gives us a very natural unaffected description of the tyranny of the ATHENIAN people. "In my poverty," says CHARMIDES, "I am much more happy than ever I was while  
 " posselt of riches; as much as it is happier to be in security  
 " than in terrors, free than a slave, to receive than to pay  
 " court, to be trusted than suspected. Formerly I was obliged  
 " to carefs every informer; some imposition was continually  
 " laid upon me; and it was never allowed me to travel, or be  
 " absent from the city. At present, when I am poor, I look  
 " big, and threaten others. The rich are afraid of me, and  
 " shew me every kind of civility and respect; and I am be-  
 " come a kind of tyrant in the city\*."

In one of the pleadings of LYSIAS†, the orator very coolly speaks of it, by the by, as a maxim of the ATHEHIAN people, that whenever they wanted money, they put to death some of the rich citizens as well as strangers, for the sake of the forfeiture. In mentioning this, he seems to have no intention of blaming them; still less of provoking them who were his audience and judges.

\* Pag. 885. *ex edit.* LEUNCLAV. † *Orat.* 29. *in* NICOM.

Whether a man was a citizen or a stranger among that people, it seems indeed requisite, either that he should impoverish himself, or the people would impoverish him, and perhaps kill him into the bargain. The orator last mentioned gives a pleasant account of an estate laid out in the public service\*; that is, above the third of it in rareshows and figured dances.

I need not insist on the GREEK tyrannies, which were altogether horrible. Even the mixed monarchies, by which most of the antient states of GREECE were governed, before the introduction of republics, were very unsettled. Scarce any city, but ATHENS, says ISOCRATES, could show a succession of kings for four or five generations†.

\* In order to recommend his client to the favour of the people, he enumerates all the sums he had expended. When *χωρηγος*, 30 minas: Upon a chorus of men 20 minas; *επισπυρριχισταίς* 8 minas; *ανδρασι χορηγων* 50 minas; *κυκλικω χωρω* 3 minas: Seven times trierarch, where he spent 6 talents: Taxes, once 30 minas, another time 40; *γυμνασιαρχων*, 12 minas; *χορηγῳ παιδικω χωρω*, 15 minas; *κομοδοις χορηγων*, 18 minas; *σπυρριχισταίς αγενεοις*, 7 minas; *τριηρει αμυλλομενῳ*, 15 minas; *αρχηθεωρος*, 30 minas; In the whole ten talents 38 minas. An immense sum for an ATHENIAN fortune, and what alone would be esteemed great riches, *Orat.* 20. 'Tis true, he says, the law did not oblige him absolutely to be at so much expence, not above a fourth. But without the favour of the people no body was so much as safe; and this was the only way to gain it. See farther, *orat.* 24. *de pop. statu*. In another place, he introduces a speaker, who says that he had spent his whole fortune, and an immense one, eighty talents, for the people. *Orat.* 25. *de prob. EVANDRI*. The *μετοικοι*, or strangers, find, says he, if they do not contribute largely enough to the people's fancy, that they have reason to repent. *Orat.* 30. *contra PHIL*. You may see with what care DEMOSTHENES displays his expences of this nature, when he pleads for himself *de corona*; and how he exaggerates MIDIAS's stinginess in this particular, in his accusation of that criminal. All this, by the by, is the mark of a very iniquitous judicature: And yet the ATHENIANS valued themselves on having the most legal and regular administration of any people in GREECE.

† Panath.

Besides many other obvious reasons for the instability of ancient monarchies, the equal division of property among the brothers in private families, must, by a necessary consequence, contribute to unsettle and disturb the state. The universal preference given to the elder by modern laws, though it increases the inequality of fortunes, has, however, this good effect, that it accustoms men to the same idea of public succession, and cuts off all claim and pretension of the younger.

The new settled colony of HERACLEA, falling immediately into factions, applied to SPARTA, who sent HERIPIDAS with full authority to quiet their dissensions. This man, not provoked by any opposition, not inflamed by party rage, knew no better expedient than immediately putting to death about 500 of the citizens\*. A strong proof how deeply rooted these violent maxims of government were throughout all GREECE.

If such was the disposition of mens minds among that refined people, what may be expected in the commonwealths of ITALY, AFRIC, SPAIN, and GAUL, which were denominated barbarous? Why otherwise did the GREEKS so much value themselves on their humanity, gentleness and moderation, above all other nations? This reasoning seems very natural. But unluckily the history of the ROMAN commonwealth; in its earlier times, if we give credit to the received accounts, stands against us. No blood was ever shed in any sedition at ROME, till the murder of the GRACCHI. DIONYSIUS HALICARNASSÆUS†, observing the singular humanity of the

\* DIOD. SIC. lib. 14.

† Lib. 1.



ROMAN people in this particular, makes use of it as an argument that they were originally of GRECIAN extraction: Whence we may conclude, that the factions and revolutions in the barbarous republics were usually more violent than even those of GREECE above-mentioned.

If the ROMANS were so late in coming to blows, they made ample compensation after they had once entered upon the bloody scene; and APPIAN's history of their civil wars contains the most frightful picture of massacres, proscriptions, and forfeitures, that ever was presented to the world. What pleases most, in that historian, is, that he seems to feel a proper resentment of these barbarous proceedings; and talks not with that provoking coolness and indifference, which custom had produced in many of the GREEK historians\*.

The maxims of antient politics contain, in general, so little humanity and moderation, that it seems superfluous to give

\* The authorities cited above, are all historians, orators, and philosophers, whose testimony is unquestioned. 'Tis dangerous to rely upon writers who deal in ridicule and satyr. What will posterity, for instance, infer from this passage of Dr. SWIFT? "I told him, that in the kingdom of TRIBNIA, (BRITAIN) by the natives called "LANGDON (LONDON) where I had sojourned some time in my travels, the bulk of "the people consist, in a manner, wholly of discoverers, witnesses, informers, accusers, prosecutors, evidences, swearers, together with their several subservient "and subaltern instruments, all under the colours, the conduct, and pay of ministers "of state and their deputies. The plots in that kingdom are usually the workmanship of those persons," &c. GULLIVER'S *travel*. Such a representation might suit the government of ATHENS; but not that of ENGLAND, which is a prodigy, even in modern times, for humanity, justice, and liberty. Yet the Doctor's satyr, though carried to extremes, as is usual with him, even beyond other satyrical writers, did not altogether want an object. The Bishop of ROCHESTER, who was his friend, and of the same party, had been banished a little before by a bill of attainder, with great justice, but without such a proof as was legal, or according to the strict forms of common law.

any

any particular reason for the violences committed at any particular period. Yet I cannot forbear observing, that the laws, in the latter ages of the ROMAN commonwealth, were so absurdly contrived, that they obliged the heads of parties to have recourse to these extremities. All capital punishments were abolished: However criminal, or, what is more, however dangerous any citizen might be, he could not regularly be punished otherwise than by banishment: And it became necessary, in the revolutions of party, to draw the sword of private vengeance; nor was it easy, when laws were once violated, to set bounds to these sanguinary proceedings. Had BRUTUS himself prevailed over the *triumvirate*, could he, in common prudence, have allowed OCTAVIUS and ANTHONY to live, and have contented himself with banishing them to RHODES or MARSEILLES, where they might still have plotted new commotions and rebellions? His executing C. ANTONIUS, brother to the *triumvir*, shows evidently his sense of the matter. Did not CICERO, with the approbation of all the wise and virtuous of ROME, arbitrarily put to death CATILINE's associates, contrary to law, and without any trial or form of process? And if he moderated his executions, did it not proceed, either from the clemency of his temper, or the conjunctures of the times? A wretched security in a government which pretends to laws and liberty!

Thus, one extreme produces another. In the same manner as excessive severity in the laws is apt to beget great relaxation in their execution; so their excessive lenity naturally produces cruelty and barbarity. 'Tis dangerous to force us, in any case, to pass their sacred boundaries.

One general cause of the disorders so frequent in all antient governments, seems to have consisted in the great difficulty of establishing any Aristocracy in those ages, and the perpetual discontents and seditions of the people, whenever even the meanest and most beggarly were excluded from the legislature, and from public offices. The very quality of *freeman* gave such a rank, being opposed to that of slave, that it seemed to intitle the possessor to every power and privilege of the commonwealth. SOLON'S \* laws excluded no freeman from votes or elections, but confined some magistracies to a particular *census*; yet were the people never satisfied till those laws were repealed. By the treaty with ANTIPATER †, no ATHENIAN had a vote whose *census* was less than 2000 *drachmas* (about 60 *l. Sterling*). And though such a government would to us appear sufficiently democratical, it was so disagreeable to that people, that above two thirds of them immediately left their country ‡. CASSANDER reduced that *census* to the half ||; yet still the government was considered as an oligarchical tyranny, and the effect of foreign violence.

SERVIUS TULLIUS'S § laws seem very equal and reasonable, by fixing the power in proportion to the property: Yet the ROMAN people could never be brought quietly to submit to them.

In those days there was no medium between a severe, jealous Aristocracy, ruling over discontented subjects; and a turbulent, factious, tyrannical Democracy.

\* PLUTARCHUS *in vita* SOLON.

† DIOD. SIC. lib. 18.

‡ Id. *ibid.*

|| Id. *ibid.*

§ TIT. LIV. lib. 1. cap. 43.



But, *thirdly*, there are many other circumstances, in which ancient nations seem inferior to the modern, both for the happiness and increase of mankind. Trade, manufactures, industry, were no where, in former ages, so flourishing as they are at present in EUROPE. The only garb of the ancients, both for males and females, seems to have been a kind of flannel, which they wore commonly white or gray, and which they scoured as often as it grew dirty. TYRE, which carried on, after CARTHAGE, the greatest commerce of any city in the MEDITERRANEAN, before it was destroyed by ALEXANDER, was no mighty city, if we credit ARRIAN'S account of its inhabitants\*. ATHENS is commonly supposed to have been a trading city: But it was as populous before the MEDIAN war as at any time after it, according to HERODOTUS†; and yet its commerce, at that time, was so inconsiderable, that, as the same historian observes‡, even the neighbouring coasts of ASIA, were as little frequented by the GREEKS as the pillars of HERCULES: For beyond these he conceived nothing.

Great interest of money, and great profits of trade, are an infallible indication, that industry and commerce are but in their infancy. We read in LYSIAS|| of 100 *per cent.* profit made of a cargo of two talents, sent to no greater distance than from ATHENS to the ADRIATIC: Nor is this mentioned as an instance of exorbitant profit. ANTIDORUS, says DE-

\* Lib. 2. There were 8000 killed during the siege; and the whole captives amounted to 30,000. DIODORUS SICULUS, lib. 17. says only 13,000: But he accounts for this small number, by saying that the TYRIANS had sent away beforehand part of their wives and children to CARTHAGE.

† Lib. 5. he makes the number of the citizens amount to 30,000. ‡ Ib. 5.

|| Orat. 33. *advers. DIAGIT.*

MOSTHENES §, paid three talents and a half for a house, which he let at a talent a-year: And the orator blames his own tutors for not employing his money to like advantage. My fortune, says he, in eleven years minority, ought to have been tripled. The value of 20 of the slaves left by his father, he computes at 40 minas, and the yearly profit of their labour at 12 \*. The most moderate interest at ATHENS, (for there was higher † often paid) was 12 *per cent.* ‡, and that paid monthly. Not to insist upon the exorbitant interest of 34 *per cent.* to which the vast sums distributed in elections had raised money || at ROME, we find, that VERRERES, before that factious period, stated 24 *per cent.* for money, which he left in the publicans hands. And though CICERO declaims against this article, it is not on account of the extravagant usury; but because it had never been customary to state any interest on such occasions †. Interest, indeed, sunk at ROME, after the settlement of the empire: But it never remained any considerable time so low, as in the commercial states of modern ages ††.

Among the other inconveniencies which the ATHENIANS felt from the fortifying DECELIA by the LACEDEMONIANS, it is represented by THUCYDIDES ††, as one of the most considerable, that they could not bring over their own corn from EUBEA by Land, passing by OROPUS; but were obliged to embark it, and to sail about the promontory of SUNIUM. A fur-

§ *Contra APHOB.* p. 25. *ex edit.* ALDI.

\* *Id.* p. 19.

† *Id.* *ibid.*

‡ *Id.* *ibid.* and ÆSCHINES *contra CTESIPH.*

|| *Epist. ad ATTIC.* lib. 5. *epist.* 21.

† *Contra VERR.* *orat.* 3.

†† See Essay IV.

†† Lib. 7.

prising instance of the imperfection of antient navigation: For the water-carriage is not here above double the land.

I do not remember any passage in any antient author, where the growth of any city is ascribed to the establishment of a manufacture. The commerce which is said to flourish, is chiefly the exchange of those commodities for which different soils and climates were suited. The sale of wine and oil into AFRICA, according to DIODORUS SICULUS \*, was the foundation of the riches of AGRIGENTUM. The situation of the city of SYBARIS, according to the same author †, was the cause of its immense populousness: being built near the two rivers CRATHYS and SYBARIS. But these two rivers, we may observe, are not navigable; and could only produce some fertile valleys, for agriculture and husbandry; an advantage so inconsiderable, that a modern writer would scarcely have taken notice of it.

The barbarity of the antient tyrants, together with the extreme love of liberty, which animated those ages, must have banished every merchant and manufacturer; and have quite depopulated the state, had it subsisted upon industry and commerce. While the cruel and suspicious DIONYSIUS was carrying on his butcheries, who, that was not detained by his landed property, and could have carried with him any art or skill to procure a subsistence in other countries, would have remained exposed to such implacable barbarity? The persecutions of PHILIP II. and LEWIS XIV. filled all EUROPE with the manufacturers of FLANDERS and of FRANCE.

\* Lib. 13.

† Lib. 12.



I grant, that agriculture is the species of industry which is chiefly requisite to the subsistence of multitudes; and it is possible, that this industry may flourish, even where manufactures and other arts are unknown and neglected. SWISSERLAND is at present a very remarkable instance; where we find, at once, the most skilful husbandmen and the most bungling tradesmen, that are to be met with in all EUROPE. That agriculture flourished in GREECE and ITALY, at least in some parts of them, and at some periods, we have reason to presume: And whether the mechanical arts had reached the same degree of perfection, may not be esteemed so material; especially, if we consider the great equality in the antient republics, where each family was obliged to cultivate, with the greatest care and industry, its own little field, in order to its subsistence.

But is it just reasoning, because agriculture may, in some instances, flourish without trade or manufactures, to conclude, that, in any great extent of country, and for any great tract of time, it would subsist alone? The most natural way, surely, of encouraging husbandry, is, first, to excite other kinds of industry, and thereby afford the labourer a ready market for his commodities, and a return of such goods as may contribute to his pleasure and enjoyment. This method is infallible and universal; and as it prevails more in modern governments than in the antient, it affords a presumption of the superior populousness of the former.

Every man, says XENOPHON †, may be a farmer: No art or skill is requisite: All consists in the industry, and attention

† Oecon.

to the execution. A strong proof, as COLUMELLA hints, that agriculture was but little known in the age of XENOPHON.

All our latter improvements and refinements, have they operated nothing towards the easy subsistence of men, and consequently towards their propagation and increase? Our superior skill in mechanics, the discovery of new worlds, by which commerce has been so much enlarged, the establishment of posts, and the use of bills of exchange: These seem all extremely useful to the encouragement of art, industry, and populousness. Were we to strike off these, what a check should we give to every kind of business and labour, and what multitudes of families would immediately perish from want and hunger? And it seems not probable, that we could supply the place of these new inventions by any other regulation or institution.

Have we reason to think, that the police of antient states was any wise comparable to that of modern, or that men had then equal security, either at home, or in their journies by land or water? I question not, but every impartial examiner would give us the preference in this particular\*.

Thus, upon comparing the whole, it seems impossible to assign any just reason, why the world should have been more populous in antient than in modern times. The equality of property among the antients, liberty, and the small divisions of their states, were indeed favourable to the propagation of mankind: But their wars were more bloody and destructive,

\* See Part I. Essay XII.

their

their governments more factious and unsettled, commerce and manufactures more feeble and languishing, and the general police more loose and irregular. These latter disadvantages seem to form a sufficient counterbalance to the former advantages; and rather favour the opposite opinion to that which commonly prevails with regard to this subject.

But there is no reasoning, it may be said, against matter of fact. If it appear, that the world was then more populous than at present, we may be assured, that our conjectures are false, and that we have overlooked some material circumstance in the comparison. This I readily own: All our preceding reasonings, I acknowledge to be mere trifling, or, at least, small skirmishes and frivolous rencounters, which decide nothing. But unluckily the main combat, where we compare facts, cannot be rendered much more decisive. The facts delivered by antient authors, are either so uncertain or so imperfect as to afford us nothing positive in this matter. How indeed could it be otherwise? The very facts which we must oppose to them, in computing the greatness of modern states, are far from being either certain or compleat. Many grounds of calculation, proceeded on by celebrated writers, are little better than those of the Emperor HELIOGABALUS, who formed an estimate of the immense greatness of ROME, from ten thousand pound weight of cobwebs which had been found in that city †.

'Tis to be remarked, that all kinds of numbers are uncertain in antient manuscripts; and have been subject to much greater corruptions than any other part of the text; and that for a

† *ÆLII LAMPRIID. in vita HELIOGAB. cap. 26.*



very obvious reason. Any alteration, in other places, commonly affects the sense or grammar, and is more readily perceived by the reader and transcriber.

Few enumerations of inhabitants have been made of any tract of country by any antient author of good authority, so as to afford us a large enough view for comparison.

'Tis probable, that there was formerly a good foundation for the number of citizens assigned to any free city; because they entered for a share of the government, and there were exact registers kept of them. But as the number of slaves is seldom mentioned, this leaves us in as great uncertainty as ever, with regard to the populousness even of single cities.

The first page of THUCYDIDES is, in my opinion, the commencement of real history. All preceding narrations are so intermixed with fable, that philosophers ought to abandon them, in a great measure, to the embellishment of poets and orators\*.

With regard to remote times, the numbers of people assigned are often ridiculous, and lose all credit and authority. The free citizens of SYBARIS, able to bear arms, and actually

\* In general, there is more candour and sincerity in antient historians, but less exactness and care, than in the moderns. Our speculative factions, especially those of religion, throw such an illusion over our minds, that men seem to regard impartiality to their adversaries and to heretics, as a vice or weakness: But the commonness of books, by means of printing, has obliged modern historians to be more careful in avoiding contradictions and incongruities. DIODORUS SICULUS is a good writer; but 'tis with pain I see his narration contradict, in so many particulars, the two most authentic pieces of all GREEK history, viz. XENOPHON's expedition, and DEMOSTHENES's orations. PLUTARCH and APPIAN seem scarce ever to have read CICERO's epistles.

drawn out in battle, were 300,000. They encountred at SIAGRA with 100,000 citizens of CROTONA, another GREEK city contiguous to them; and were defeated. This is DIODORUS SICULUS's\* account; and is very seriously insisted on by that historian: STRABO† also mentions the same number of SYBARITES.

DIODORUS SICULUS ‡, enumerating the inhabitants of AGRIGENTUM, when it was destroyed by the CARTHAGINIANS, says, that they amounted to 20,000 citizens, 200,000 strangers, besides slaves, who, in so opulent a city as he represents it, would probably be, at least, as numerous. We must remark, that the women and the children are not included; and that therefore, upon the whole, the city must have contained near two millions of inhabitants §. And what was the reason of so immense an increase! They were very industrious in cultivating the neighbouring fields, not exceeding a small ENGLISH county; and they traded with their wine and oil to AFRICA, which, at that time, had none of these commodities.

PTOLEMY, says THEOCRITUS ||, commands 33,339 cities. I suppose the singularity of the number was the reason of assigning it. DIODORUS SICULUS † assigns three millions of inhabitants to EGYPT, a very small number: But then he makes the number of their cities amount to 18,000: An evident contradiction.

\* Lib. 12.

† Lib. 6.

‡ Lib. 13.

§ DIOGENES LAERTIUS (*in vita EMPEDOCLES*) says, that AGRIGENTUM contained only 800,000 inhabitants.

|| Idyll. 17.

† Lib. 1.

He says \*, the people were formerly seven millions. Thus remote times are always most envied and admired.

That XERXES's army was extremely numerous, I can readily believe; both from the great extent of his empire, and from the foolish practice of the Eastern nations, of encumbering their camp with a superfluous multitude: But will any rational man cite HERODOTUS's wonderful narrations as an authority? There is something very rational, I own, in LYSIAS's † argument upon this subject. Had not XERXES's army been incredibly numerous, says he, he had never built a bridge over the HELLESPONT: It had been much easier to have transported his men over so short a passage, with the numerous shipping of which he was master.

POLYBIUS ‡ says, that the ROMANS, between the first and second PUNIC wars, being threatened with an invasion from the GAULS, mustered all their own forces, and those of their allies, and found them amount to seven hundred thousand men able to bear arms. A great number surely, and which, when joined to the slaves, is probably not less, if not rather more than that extent of country affords at present ||. The enumeration too seems to have been made with some exactness: and POLYBIUS gives us the detail of the particulars. But might not the number be magnified, in order to encourage the people?

\* Id. *ibid.*

† *Orat. funebri.*

‡ Lib. 2.

|| The country that supplied this number, was not above a third of ITALY, *viz.* the Pope's dominions, TUSCANY, and a part of the kingdom of NAPLES: But perhaps in those early times there were very few slaves, except in Rome, or the great cities.



DIODORUS SICULUS \*, makes the same enumeration amount to near a million. These variations are suspicious. He plainly too supposes, that ITALY in his time was not so populous: Another very suspicious circumstance. For who can believe, that the inhabitants of that country diminished from the time of the first PUNIC war to that of the *triumvirates*?

JULIUS CÆSAR, according to APPIAN †, encountered four millions of GAULS, killed one million, and took another million prisoners ‡. Supposing the number of the enemy's army and of the killed could be exactly assigned, which never is possible; how could it be known how often the same man returned into the armies, or how distinguish the new from the old levied soldiers? No attention ought ever to be given to such loose, exaggerated calculations; especially where the author tells us not the mediums upon which the calculations were founded.

PATERCULUS || makes the number killed by CÆSAR amount only to to 400,000: A much more probable account, and more easily reconciled to the history of these wars given by that conqueror himself in his Commentaries.

One would imagine, that every circumstance of the life and actions of DIONYSIUS the elder might be regarded as authentic, and free from all fabulous exaggeration; both because he lived at a time when letters flourished most in GREECE, and because his chief historian was PHILISTUS, a man allowed to

\* Lib 2.

† CELTICA.

‡ PLUTARCH (*in vita Cæs.*) makes the number that CÆSAR fought with amount only to three millions. JULIAN. (*in CÆSARIBUS*) to two.

|| Lib. 2. cap. 47.

be of great genius, and who was a courtier and minister of that prince. But can we admit, that he had a standing army of 100,000 foot, 10,000 horse, and a fleet of 400 gallies\*? These, we may observe, were mercenary forces, and subsisted upon their pay, like our armies in EUROPE. For the citizens were all disarmed; and when DION afterwards invaded SICILY, and called on his countrymen to vindicate their liberty, he was obliged to bring arms along with him, which he distributed among those who joined him†. In a state where agriculture alone flourishes, there may be many inhabitants; and if these be all armed and disciplined, a great force may be called out upon occasion: But great numbers of mercenary troops can never be maintained without either trade and manufactures, or very extensive dominions. The United Provinces never were masters of such a force by sea and land, as that which is said to belong to DIONYSIUS; yet they possess as large a territory, perfectly well cultivated, and have infinitely more resources from their commerce and industry. DIODORUS SICULUS allows, that, even in his time, the army of DIONYSIUS appeared incredible; that is, as I interpret it, it was entirely a fiction, and the opinion arose from the exaggerated flattery of the courtiers, and perhaps from the vanity and policy of the tyrant himself.

'Tis a very usual fallacy, to consider all the ages of antiquity as one period, and to compute the numbers contained in the great cities mentioned by antient authors, as if these cities had been all cotemporary. The GREEK colonies flourished extremely in SICILY during the age of ALEXANDER: But

\* DIOD. SIC. lib. 2.

† PLUTARCH *in vita DIONIS*.

in AUGUSTUS's time they were so decayed, that almost all the product of that fertile island was consumed in Italy \*.

Let us now examine the numbers of inhabitants assigned to particular cities in antiquity; and omitting the numbers of NINEVEH, BABYLON, and the EGYPTIAN THEBES, let us confine ourselves to the sphere of real history, to the GRECIAN and ROMAN states. I must own, the more I consider this subject, the more am I inclined to scepticism, with regard to the great populousness ascribed to antient times.

ATHENS is said by PLATO † to be a very great city; and it was surely the greatest of all the GREEK ‡ cities except SYRACUSE, which was nearly about the same size in THUCYDIDES's § time, and afterwards increased beyond it. For CICERO || mentions it as the greatest of all the GREEK cities in his time; not comprehending, I suppose, either ANTIOCH or ALEXANDRIA under that denomination. ATHENÆUS † says, that, by the enumeration of DEMETRIUS PHALEREUS, there were in ATHENS 21,000 citizens, 10,000 strangers, and 400,000 slaves. This number is very much insisted on by those whose opinion I call in question, and is esteemed a fundamental fact to their purpose: But, in my opinion, there is no point of criticism more certain, than that ATHENÆUS, and CTESICLES, whom he cites, are here mistaken, and that the

\* STRABO, lib. 6.

† *Apolog. Socr.*

‡ ARGOS seems also to have been a great city: For LYSIAS contents himself with saying that it did not exceed ATHENS. *Orat. 34.*

§ Lib. 6. See also PLUTARCH *in vita NICIÆ.*

|| *Orat. contra VERREM*, lib. 4. cap. 52. Strabo, lib. 6. says it was twenty two miles in compass. But then we are to consider, that it contained two harbours within it; one of which was a very large one, and might be regarded as a kind of bay.

† Lib. 6. cap. 20.



number of slaves is augmented by a whole cypher, and ought not to be regarded as more than 40,000.

*First*, When the number of citizens is said to be 21,000 by ATHENÆUS\*, men of full age are only understood. For, (1.) HERODOTUS says †, that ARISTAGORAS, ambassador from the IONIANS, found it harder to deceive one SPARTAN than 30,000 ATHENIANS; meaning, in a loose way, the whole state, supposed to be met in one popular assembly, excluding the women and children. (2.) THUCYDIDES ‡ says, that, making allowance for all the absentees in the fleet, army, garrisons, and for people employed in their private affairs, the ATHENIAN assembly never arose to five thousand. (3.) The forces enumerated by the same historian §, being all citizens, and amounting to 13,000 heavy-armed infantry, prove the same method of calculation; as also the whole tenor of the GREEK historians, who always understand men of full age, when they assign the number of citizens in any republic. Now, these being but the fourth of the inhabitants, the free ATHENIANS were by this account 84,000; and the strangers 40,000; and the slaves, calculating by the smaller number, and allowing that they married and propagated at the same rate with freemen, were 160,000; and the whole inhabitants 284,000: A large enough number surely. The other number, 1,720,000, makes ATHENS larger than LONDON and PARIS united.

*Secondly*, There were but 10,000 houses in ATHENS ||.

\* DEMOSTHENES assigns 20,000; *contra* ARISTOG.

† Lib. 5.

‡ Lib. 8.

§ Lib. 2. DIODORUS SICULUS's account perfectly agrees, lib. 12.

|| XENOPHON *Mem.* lib. 2.

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly*, Though the extent of the walls, as given us by THUCYDIDES \*, be great, (*viz.* eighteen miles, beside the sea-coast): yet XENOPHON † says, there was much waste ground within the walls. They seemed indeed to have joined four distinct and separate cities ‡.

*Fourthly*, No insurrection of the slaves, nor suspicion of insurrection, are ever mentioned by historians; except one commotion of the miners §.

*Fifthly*, The ATHENIANS treatment of their slaves is said by XENOPHON ||, and DEMOSTHENES ††, and PLAUTUS ‡‡, to have been extremely gentle and indulgent: Which could never have been the case, had the disproportion been twenty to one. The disproportion is not so great in any of our colonies; and yet we are obliged to exercise a very rigorous military government over the negroes.

*Sixthly*, No man is ever esteemed rich for possessing what may be reckoned an equal distribution of property in any country, or even triple or quadruple that wealth. Thus every person in ENGLAND is computed by some to spend six-pence a-day: Yet is he estimated but poor who has five times that sum. Now TIMARCHUS is said by ÆSCHINES §§ to have

\* Lib 2.

† *De ratione red.*

‡ We are to observe, that when DIONYSIUS HALICARNASSÆUS says, that if we regard the antient walls of ROME, the extent of the city will not appear greater than that of ATHENS; he must mean the ACROPOLIS and high town only. No antient author ever speaks of the PYRÆUM, PHALERUS, and MUNYCHIA, as the same with ATHENS. Much less can it be supposed, that DIONYSIUS would consider the matter in that light, after the walls of CIMON and PERICLES were destroyed, and ATHENS was entirely separated from these other towns. This observation destroys all VOSSIUS's reasonings, and introduces common sense into these calculations.

§. ATHEN. lib. 6.

||. *De rep.* ATHEN.

†† PHILIP. 3.

‡‡ STICHO.

§§. *Contra* TIMACH.

been left in easy circumstances; but he was master only of ten slaves employed in manufactures. *LYSIAS* and his brother, two strangers, were proscribed by the thirty for their great riches; though they had but sixty a-piece\*. *DEMOSTHENES* was left very rich by his father; yet he had no more than fifty-two slaves†. His workhouse, of twenty cabinet-makers, is said to be a very considerable manufactory‡.

*Seventhly*, During the *DECELIAN* war, as the *GREEK* historians call it, 20,000 slaves deserted, and brought the *ATHENIANS* to great distress, as we learn from *THUCYDIDES* §. This could not have happened, had they been only the twentieth part. The best slaves would not desert.

*Eighthly*, *XENOPHON* || proposes a scheme for entertaining by the public 10,000 slaves: and that so great a number may possibly be supported, any one will be convinced, says he, who considers the numbers we possessed before the *DECELIAN* war. A way of speaking altogether incompatible with the larger number of *ATHENÆUS*.

*Ninthly*, The whole *census* of the state of *ATHENS* was less than 6000 talents. And though numbers in antient manuscripts be often suspected by critics, yet this is unexceptionable; both because *DEMOSTHENES* †, who gives it, gives also the detail, which checks him; and because *POLYBIUS* †† assigns the same number, and reasons upon it. Now, the most vulgar slave could yield by his labour an *obolus* a day, over and above his maintenance, as we learn from *XENOPHON* ††, who says, that *NICIAS*'s overseer paid his master so much for slaves,

\* *Orat* 11.† *Contra* *APHOB.*‡ *Ibid.*§ *Lib.* 7.|| *De rat. red.*† *De classibus.*†† *Lib.* 2, cap. 62.†† *De rat. red.*

whom



whom he employed in digging of mines. If you will take the pains to estimate an *obolus* a day, and the slaves at 400,000, computing only at four years purchase, you will find the sum above 12,000 talents; even though allowance be made for the great number of holidays in ATHENS. Besides, many of the slaves would have a much greater value from their art. The lowest that DEMOSTHENES estimates any of his \* father's slaves, is two minas a-head. And upon this supposition, it is a little difficult, I confess, to reconcile even the number of 40,000 slaves with the *ensus* of 6000 talents.

Tenthly, CHIOS is said by THUCYDIDES †, to contain more slaves than any GREEK city, except SPARTA. SPARTA then had more than ATHENS, in proportion to the number of citizens. The SPARTANS were 9000 in the town, 30,000 in the country ‡. The male slaves, therefore, of full age, must have been more than 780,000; and the whole more than 3,120,000. A number impossible to be maintained in a narrow barren country, such as LACONIA, which had no trade. Had the HELOTES been so very numerous, the murder of 2000 mentioned by THUCYDIDES §, would have irritated them, without weakening them.

Besides, we are to consider, that the number assigned by ATHENÆUS ||, whatever it is, comprehends all the inhabitants of ATTICA, as well as those of ATHENS. The ATHENIANS

\* *Contra APHOEVM.*

† Lib. 8.

‡ PLUTARCH. *in vita LYCURG.*

§ Lib 4.

|| The same author affirms, that CORINTH had once 460,000 slaves, ÆGINA 470,000. But the foregoing arguments hold stronger against these facts, which are indeed entirely absurd and impossible. 'Tis however remarkable, that ATHENÆUS cites so great an authority as ARISTOTLE for this last fact: And the scholiast on PINDAR mentions the same number of slaves in ÆGINA.

affected much a country life, as we learn from THUCYDIDES\*; and when they were all chased into town, by the invasion of their territory during the PELOPONESIAN war, the city was not able to contain them; and they were obliged to lie in the porticoes, temples, and even streets, for want of lodging†.

The same remark is to be extended to all the other GREEK cities; and when the number of the citizens is assigned, we must always understand it of the inhabitants of the neighbouring country, as well as of the city. Yet, even with this allowance, it must be confessed, that GREECE was a populous country, and exceeded what we could imagine of so narrow a territory, naturally not very fertile, and which drew no supplies of corn from other places. For excepting ATHENS, which traded to PONTUS for that commodity, the other cities seem to have subsisted chiefly from their neighbouring territory‡.

RHODES is well known to have been a city of extensive commerce, and of great fame and splendor; yet it contained

\* Lib. 2. † THUCYD. lib. 2.

‡ DEMOST. *contra LEPT.* The ATHENIANS brought yearly from PONTUS 400,000 medimni or bushels of corn, as appeared from the custom-house books. And this was the greatest part of their importation. This by the by is a strong proof that there is some great mistake in the foregoing passage of ATHENÆUS. For ATTICA itself was so barren in corn, that it produced not enough even to maintain the peasants. TIT. LIV. lib. 43. cap. 6. LUCIAN, in his *navigium sive vota*, says, that a ship, which by the dimensions he gives, seems to have been about the size of our third rates, carried as much corn as would maintain all ATTICA for a twelvemonth. But perhaps ATHENS was decayed at that time; and besides, it is not safe to trust such loose rhetorical calculations.

only 6000 citizens able to bear arms, when it was besieged by DEMETRIUS\*.

THEBES was always one of the capital cities of GREECE †: But the number of it citizens exceeded not those of RHODES ‡. PHLIASIA is said to be a small city by XENOPHON §, yet we find, that it contained 6000 citizens ||. I pretend not to reconcile these two facts. Perhaps, XENOPHON calls PHLIASIA a small town, because it made but a small figure in GREECE, and maintained only a subordinate alliance with SPARTA; or perhaps the country belonging to it, was extensive, and most of the citizens were employed in the cultivation of it, and dwelt in the neighbouring villages.

MANTINEA was equal to any city in ARCADIA †: Consequently it was equal to MEGALOPOLIS, which was fifty stadia

\* DIOD. SIC. lib. 20. † ISOCR. *paneg.*

‡ DIOD. SIC. lib. 17. When ALEXANDER attacked THEBES, we may safely conclude, that almost all the inhabitants were present. Whoever is acquainted with the spirit of the GREEKS, especially of the THEBANS, will never suspect, that any of them would desert their country, when it was reduced to such extreme peril and distress. As ALEXANDER took the town by storm, all those who bore arms were put to the sword without mercy; and they amounted only to 6000 men. Among these were some strangers and manumitted slaves. The captives, consisting of old men, women, children, and slaves, were sold, and they amounted to 30,000. We may therefore conclude that the free citizens in THEBES, of both sexes and all ages, were near 24,000; the strangers and slaves about 12,000. These last, we may observe, were somewhat fewer in proportion than at ATHENS; as is reasonable to imagine from this circumstance, that ATHENS was a town of more trade to support slaves, and of more entertainment to allure strangers. It is also to be remarked, that thirty-six thousand was the whole number of people, both in the city of THEBES, and the neighbouring territory: A very moderate number, it must be confessed; and this computation being founded in facts which appear undisputable, must have great weight in the present controversy. The above mentioned number of RHODIANS too were all the inhabitants of the island, who were free, and able to bear arms.

§ HIST. GRÆC. lib. 7. || Id. lib. 7. † POLYB. lib. 2.



or sixty miles and a quarter in circumference \*. But MANTINEA had only 3000 citizens †. The GREEK cities, therefore, contained often fields and gardens, together with houses; and we cannot judge of them by the extent of their walls. ATHENS contained no more than 10,000 houses; yet its walls, with the sea-coast, were about twenty miles in extent. SYRACUSE was twenty-two miles in circumference; yet was scarce ever spoke of by the antients as more populous than ATHENS. BABYLON was a square of fifteen miles, or sixty miles in circuit; but it contained large cultivated fields and inclosures, as we learn from PLINY. Though AURELIAN's wall was fifty miles in circumference ‡; the circuit of all the thirteen divisions of ROME, taken apart, according to PUBLIUS VICTOR, was only about forty-three miles. When an enemy invaded the country, all the inhabitants retired within the walls of the antient cities, with their cattle and furniture, and instruments of husbandry; and the great height to which the walls were raised, enabled a small number to defend them with facility.

SPARTA, says XENOPHON §, is one of the cities of GREECE that has the fewest inhabitants. Yet POLYBIUS || says, that it was forty-eight stadia in circumference, and was round.

All the ÆTOLIANS able to bear arms in ANTIPATER's time, deducting some few garrisons, were but ten thousand men †.

\* POLYB. lib. 9. cap. 20. † LYSIAS, orat. 34. ‡ VOPISCUS *in vita* AUREL.

§ *De rep.* LACED. This passage is not easily reconciled with that of PLUTARCH above, who says, that SPARTA had 6000 citizens.

|| POLYB. lib. 9. cap. 20. † DIOD. SIC. lib. 18.

POLYBIUS \* tells us, that the ACHÆAN league might, without any inconvenience, march 30 or 40,000 men: And this account seems very probable: For that league comprehended the greatest part of PELOPONNESUS. Yet PAUSANIAS †, speaking of the same period, says, that all the ACHÆANS able to bear arms, even when several manumitted slaves were joined to them, did not amount to fifteen thousand.

The THESSALIANS, till their final conquest by the ROMANS, were, in all ages, turbulent, factious, seditious, disorderly ‡. 'Tis not natural to suppose, that that part of GREECE abounded much in people.

We are told by THUCYDIDES §, that the part of PELOPONNESUS adjoining to PYLOS, was desert and uncultivated. HERODOTUS ||, that MACEDONIA was full of lions and wild bulls; animals which can only inhabit vast unpeopled forests. These were the two extremities of GREECE.

All the inhabitants of EPIRUS, of all ages, sexes and conditions, who were sold by PAULUS ÆMILIUS, amounted only to 150,000 †. Yet EPIRUS might be double the extent of YORKSHIRE.

JUSTIN \* tells us, that when PHILIP of MACEDON was declared head of the GREEK confederacy, he called a congress of all the states, except the LACEDEMONIANS, who refused to concur; and he found the force of the whole, upon com-

\* LEGAT. † In ACHAÏCIS.  
‡ TIT. LIV. lib. 34. cap. 51. PLATO in CRITONE. § Lib. 7.  
|| Lib. 7. † TIT. LIV. lib. 45. cap. 34. \* Lib. 9. cap. 5.

putation, to amount to 200,000 infantry, and 15,000 cavalry. This must be understood to be all the citizens capable of bearing arms. For as the GREEK republics maintained no mercenary forces, and had no militia distinct from the whole body of the citizens, it is not conceivable what other medium there could be of computation. That such an army could ever by GREECE be brought into the field, and be maintained there, is contrary to all history. Upon this supposition, therefore, we may thus reason. The free GREEKS of all ages and sexes were 860,000. The slaves, estimating them by the number of ATHENIAN slaves as above, who seldom married or had families, were double the male citizens of full age, viz. 430,000. And all the inhabitants of antient GREECE, excepting LACONIA, were about one million two hundred and ninety thousand: No mighty number, nor exceeding what may be found at present in SCOTLAND, a country of nearly the same extent, and very indifferently peopled.

We may now consider the numbers of people in ROME and ITALY, and collect all the lights afforded us by scattered passages in antient authors. We shall find, upon the whole, a great difficulty in fixing any opinion on that head; and no reason to support those exaggerated calculations, so much insisted on by modern writers.

DIONYSIUS HALICARNASSÆUS \* says, that the antient walls of ROME were nearly of the same compass with those of ATHENS, but the suburbs ran out to a great extent; and it was difficult to tell, where the town ended or the country begun. In some places of ROME, it appears, from the same

\* Lib. 4.



author \*, from JUVENAL †, and from other antient writers ‡, that the houses were high, and families lived in separate storeys, one above another: But it is probable, that these were only the poorer citizens, and only in some few streets. If we may judge from the younger PLINY's § account of his house, and from BARTOLI's plans of antient buildings, the men of quality had very spacious palaces; and their buildings were like the CHINESE houses at this day, where each apartment is separated from the rest, and rises no higher than a single storey. To which if we add, that the ROMAN nobility much affected very extensive porticoes, and even woods || in town; we may perhaps allow VOSSIUS (though there is no manner of reason

\* Lib. 101. † Satyr. 3. l. 269, 270.

‡ STRABO, lib. 5. says, that the emperor AUGUSTUS prohibited the raising houses higher than seventy foot. In another passage, lib. 16. he speaks of the houses of ROME, as remarkably high. See also to the same purpose VITRUVIUS, lib. 2. cap. 8. ARISTIDES the sophist, in his oration *de Pace*, says, that ROME consisted of cities on the top of cities; and that if one were to spread it out, and unfold it, it would cover the whole surface of ITALY. Where an author indulges himself in such extravagant declamations, and gives so much into the hyperbolical style, one knows not how far he must be reduced. But this reasoning seems natural! If ROME was built in so scattered a manner as DIONYSIUS says, and ran so much into the country, there must have been very few streets where the houses were raised so high. 'Tis only for want of ground, that any body builds in that inconvenient manner.

§ Lib. 2. epist. 16. lib. 5. epist. 6. 'Tis true, PLINY there describes a country-house: But since that was the idea which the ancients formed of a magnificent and convenient building, the great men would certainly build the same way in town. "In laxitatem ruris excurrunt," says SENECA of the rich and voluptuous, epist. 114. VALERIUS MAXIMUS, lib. 4. cap. 4. speaking of CINCINNATUS's field of four acres, says, "Auguste se habitare nunc putat, cujus domus tantum patet quantum CINCINNATIURA patuerant." To the same purpose see lib. 3. cap. 15. also lib. 18. cap. 2.

|| VITRUV. lib. 5. cap. 11. TACIT. annal. lib. 11. cap. 3. SÆTON. in vita Oct. cap. 72. &c.

for

for it) to read the famous passage of the elder PLINY † his own way without admitting the extravagant consequences which he draws from it.

The

† “ *Mœnia ejus (ROMÆ) collegere ambitu imperatoribus, censoribusque VESPASIANIS, A. U. C. 828. pass. xiii. MCC. complexa montes septem, ipsa dividitur in regiones quatuordecim, compita earum 265. Eiusdem spatii mensura, currente a Milliario in capite Rom. Fori statuto, ad singulas portas, quæ sunt hodie numero 37, ita ut duodecim portæ semel numerentur, prætereanturque ex veteribus septem, quæ esse desierunt, efficit passuum per directum 30,775. Ad extrema vero tectorum cum castris prætoris ab eodem Milliario, per vicos omnium viarum, mensura collegit paulo amplius septuaginta millia passuum. Quo si quis altitudinem tectorum addat, dignam profecto, æstimationem concipiat, fateaturque nullius urbis magnitudinem in toto orbe potuisse ei comparari.*” PDIN. lib. 3. cap. 5.

All the best manuscripts of PLINY read the passage as here cited, and fix the compass of the walls of ROME to be thirteen miles. The question is, What PLINY means by 30,775 paces, and how that number was formed? The manner in which I conceive it, is this. ROME was a semicircular area of thirteen miles circumference. The Forum, and consequently the Milliarium, we know, was situated on the banks of the TYBER, and near the center of the circle, or upon the diameter of the semicircular area. Though there were thirty-seven gates to ROME, yet only twelve of them had straight streets, leading from them to the Milliarium. PLINY, therefore, having assigned the circumference of ROME, and knowing that that alone was not sufficient to give us a just notion of its surface, uses this farther method. He supposes all the streets, leading from the Milliarium to the twelve gates, to be laid together into one straight line, and supposes we run along that line, so as to count each gate once: In which case, he says, that the whole line is 30,775 paces: Or, in other words, that each street or radius of the semicircular area is upon an average two miles and a half; and the whole length of ROME is five miles; and its breadth about half as much, besides the scattered suburbs.

PERE HARDOUIN understands this passage in the same manner; with regard to the laying together the several streets of ROME into one line, in order to compose 30,775 paces: But then he supposes, that streets led from the Milliarium to every gate, and that no street exceeded 800 paces in length. But (1.) a semicircular area, whose radius was only 800 paces, could never have a circumference near thirteen miles, the compass of ROME as assigned by PLINY. A radius of two miles and a half forms very nearly that circumference. (2.) There is an absurdity in supposing a city so built

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The number of citizens who received corn by the public distribution in AUGUSTUS's time, were two hundred thousand.

built as to have streets running to its center from every gate in its circumference. These streets must interfere as they approach. (3.) This diminishes too much from the greatness of antient ROME, and reduces that city below even BRISTOL or ROTTERDAM.

The sense which Vossius in his *Observationes variae* puts on this passage of PLINY, errs widely in the other extreme. One manuscript, of no authority, instead of thirteen miles, has assigned thirty miles for the compass of the walls of ROME. And Vossius understands this only of the curvilinear part of the circumference; supposing, that as the TYBER formed the diameter, there were no walls built on that side. But (1.) this reading is allowed contrary to almost all the manuscripts. (2.) Why should PLINY, a concise writer, repeat the compass of the walls of ROME in two successive sentences? (3.) Why repeat it with so sensible a variation? (4.) What is the meaning of PLINY's mentioning twice the MILLIARIUM, if a line was measured that had no dependence on the MILLIARIUM? (5.) AURELIAN's wall is said by VOPISCUS to have been drawn *laxiore ambitu*, and to have comprehended all the buildings and suburbs on the north side of the TYBER; yet its compass was only fifty miles; and even here critics suspect some mistake or corruption in the text. It is not probable, that ROME would diminish from AUGUSTUS to AURELIAN. It remained still the capital of the same empire; and none of the civil wars in that long period except the tumults on the death of MAXIMUS and BALBINUS, ever affected the city. CARACALLA is said by AURELIUS VICTOR to have increased ROME. (6.) There are no remains of antient buildings, which mark any such greatness of ROME. Vossius's reply to this objection seems absurd, That the rubbish would sink sixty or seventy feet below ground. It appears from SPARTIAN (*in vita Severi*) that the five-mile stone *in vita Lavicana* was out of the city. (7.) OLYMPIODORUS and PUBLIUS VICTOR fix the number of houses in ROME to be betwixt forty and fifty thousand. (8.) The very extravagance of the consequences drawn by this critic, as well as LIPSIVS, if they be necessary, destroys the foundation on which they are grounded: That ROME contained fourteen millions of inhabitants; while the whole kingdom of FRANCE contains only five, according to his computation, &c.

The only objection to the sense which we have affixed above to the passage of PLINY, seems to lie in this, That PLINY, after mentioning the thirty-seven gates of ROME, assigns only a reason for suppressing the seven old ones, and says nothing of the



land\*. This one would esteem a pretty certain ground of calculation: Yet it is attended with such circumstances as throw us back into doubt and uncertainty.

Did the poorer citizens only receive the distribution? It was calculated, to be sure, chiefly for their benefit. But it appears from a passage in Cicerō †, that the rich might also take their portion, and that it was esteemed no reproach in them to apply for it.

To whom was the corn given; whether only to heads of families, or to every man, woman, and child? The portion every month was five *modii* to each ‡, (about 5 sixths of a bushel.) This was too little for a family, and too much for an individual. A very accurate antiquarian ||, therefore, infers, that it was given to every man of full years: But he allows the matter to be uncertain.

Was it strictly inquired, whether the claimant lived within the precincts of ROME, or was it sufficient that he presented himself at the monthly distribution? This last seems more probable †.

Were

the eighteen gates, the streets leading from which terminated, according to my opinion, before they reached the Forum. But as PLINY was writing to the ROMANS, who perfectly knew the disposition of the streets, it is not strange he should take a circumstance for granted, which was so familiar to every body. Perhaps too, many of these gates led to wharfs upon the river.

\* *Ex monument. Ancy.*

† *Tusc. quæst. lib. 3. cap. 48.*

‡ *Licinius apud Sallust. hist. frag. lib. 3.*

|| *Nicolaus Hertenfusus de re frumentaria Roman.*

† Not to take the people too much from their business, AUGUSTUS ordained the distribution of corn to be made only thrice a-year: But the people finding the monthly distributions

Were there no false claimants? We are told †, that CÆSAR struck off at once 170,000, who had crept in without a just title; and it is very little probable, that he remedied all abuses.

But, lastly, what proportion of slaves must we assign to these citizens? This is the most material question; and the most uncertain. 'Tis very doubtful, whether ATHENS can be established as a rule for ROME. Perhaps the ATHENIANS had more slaves, because they employed them in manufactures, for which a capital city, like ROME, seems not so proper. Perhaps, on the other hand, the ROMANS had more slaves, on account of their superior luxury and riches.

There were exact bills of mortality kept at ROME; but no antient author has given us the number of burials, except SÆTONTIUS ‡, who tells us, that in one season there were 30,000 names carried to the temple of LIBETINA: But this was during a plague; which can afford no certain foundation for any inference.

The public corn, though distributed only to 200,000 citizens, affected very considerably the whole agriculture of ITALY ||: A fact no way reconcilable to some modern exaggerations with regard to the inhabitants of that country.

distributions more convenient, (as preserving, I suppose, a more regular œconomy in their family) desired to have them restored. SÆTONT. AUGUST. cap. 40. Had not some of the people come from some distance for their corn, AUGUSTUS's precaution seems superfluous.

† Sueton. in Jul. cap. 41.

‡ In vita Neronis.

|| Sueton. Aug. cap. 42.

The best ground of conjecture I can find concerning the greatness of antient ROME, is this: We are told by HERODIAN \*, that ANTIOCH and ALEXANDRIA were very little inferior to ROME. It appears from DIODORUS SICULUS †, that one straight street of ALEXANDRIA reaching from port to port, was five miles long; and as ALEXANDRIA was much more extended in length than breadth, it seems to have been a city nearly of the bulk of PARIS ‡; and ROME might be about the size of LONDON.

There lived in ALEXANDRIA, in DIODORUS SICULUS'S time ||, 300,000 free people, comprehending, I suppose, women:

\* Lib. 4. cap. 5.

† Lib. 17.

‡ QUINTUS CURTIUS says, its walls were only ten miles in circumference, when founded by ALEXANDER; lib. 4. cap. 8. STRABO, who had travelled to ALEXANDRIA, as well as DIODORUS SICULUS, says it was scarce four miles long, and in most places about a mile broad; lib. 17. PLINY says it resembled a MACEDONIAN cassock, stretching out in the corners; lib. 5. cap. 10. Notwithstanding this bulk of ALEXANDRIA, which seems but moderate, DIODORUS SICULUS, speaking of its circuit as drawn by ALEXANDER, (which it never exceeded, as we learn from AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, lib. 22. cap. 16.) says it was *μυγεῖν διαφερόντα*, *extremely great*, *ibid.* The reason which he assigns for its surpassing all cities of the world, (for he excepts not ROME) is, that it contained 300,000 free inhabitants. He also mentions the revenues of the kings, *viz.* 6000 talents, as another circumstance to the same purpose: No such mighty sum in our eyes even though we make allowances for the different value of money. What STRABO says of the neighbouring country, means only that it was well peopled, *οικημένα καλῶς*. Might not one affirm, without any great hyperbole, that the whole banks of the river from GRAVESEND to WINDSOR are one city? This is even more than STRABO says of the banks of the lake MAREOTIS, and of the canal to CANOPUS. 'Tis a vulgar saying in ITALY, that the King of SARDINIA has but one town in PIEDMONT; for it is all a town. AGRIPPA in JOSEPHUS *de bello JUDÆIC.* lib. 2. cap. 16. to make his audience comprehend the excessive greatness of ALEXANDRIA, which he endeavours to magnify, describes only the compass of the city as drawn by ALEXANDER: A clear proof that the bulk of the inhabitants were lodged there, and that the neighbouring country was no more than what might be expected about all great towns, very well cultivated, and well peopled. || Lib. 17.



and children \*. But what number of slaves? Had we any just ground to fix these at an equal number with the free inhabitants, it would favour the foregoing calculation.

There is a passage in HERODIAN, which is a little surprising. He says positively, that the palace of the Emperor was as large as all the rest of the city †. This was NERO's golden house, which is indeed represented by SÜETONIUS ‡ and PLINY as of an enormous extent ||; but no power of imagination can make us conceive it to bear any proportion to such a city as LONDON.

We may observe, that, had the historian been relating NERO's extravagance, and had he made use of such an expression, it would have had much less weight; these rhetorical exaggerations being so apt to creep into an author's style, even when

\* He says ελευθεροι, not πολιται, which last expression must have been understood of citizens alone, and grown men.

† Lib. 4. cap. 1. *πασης πολιως*. POLITIAN interprets it “*adibus majoribus etiam reliqua urbe.*”

‡ He says (in NERONE cap. 30.) that a portico or piazza of it was 3000 feet long; “*tanta laxitas ut porticus triplices milliarias haberet.*” He cannot mean three miles. For the whole extent of the house from the PALATINE to the ESQUILINE was not near so great. So when VOPISC. in AURELIANO mentions a portico in SALLUST's gardens, which he calls *porticus milliariensis*, it must be understood of a thousand feet. So also HORACE;

“Nulla decempedis

Metata privatis opacam

Porticus excipiebat Arcton.” Lib. 2. ode 15.

So also in lib. 1. Satyr. 8.

Mille pedes in fronte, trecentos cippus in agrum

Hic dabat.”

|| PLINIUS, lib. 36. cap. 15. “*Bis vidimus urbem totam cingi domibus principum, CAII AC NERONIS.*”

the most chaste and correct. But 'tis mentioned by HERODIAN only by the by, in relating the quarrels between GETA and CARACALLA.

It appears from the same historian\*, that there was then much land uncultivated, and put to no manner of use; and he ascribes it as a great praise to PERTINAX, that he allowed every one to take such land either in ITALY or elsewhere, and cultivate it as he pleased, without paying any taxes. *Lands, uncultivated, and put to no manner of use!* This is not heard of in any part of CHRISTENDOM; except perhaps in some remote parts of HUNGARY; as I have been informed. And it surely corresponds very ill with that idea of the extreme populousness of antiquity, so much insisted on.

We learn from VOPISCUS†, that there was in ETRURIA much fertile land uncultivated, which the Emperor AURELIAN intended to convert into vineyards, in order to furnish the ROMAN people with a gratuitous distribution of wine: A very proper expedient to dispeople still farther that capital and all the neighbouring territories.

It may not be amiss to take notice of the account which POLYBIUS‡ gives of the great herds of swine to be met with in TUSCANY and LOMBARDY, as well as in GREECE, and of the method of feeding them which was then practised. "There are great herds of swine," says he, "throughout all ITALY, particularly in former times, through ETRURIA and CISALPINE GAUL. And a herd frequently contains a thousand or more swine. When one of these herds in

\* Lib. 2. cap. 15.

† In AURELIAN, cap. 48.

‡ Lib. 12. cap. 2.

"feeding

“ feeding meets with another; they mix together; and the  
 “ swine-herds have no other expedient to separate them than  
 “ to go to different quarters, where they found their horn;  
 “ and these animals, being accustomed to that signal, run  
 “ immediately each to the horn of his own keeper. Whereas  
 “ in GREECE, if the herds of swine happen to mix in the  
 “ forests, he who has the greatest flock, takes cunningly the  
 “ opportunity of driving all away. And thieves are very apt  
 “ to purloin the straggling hogs, which have wandered to a  
 “ great distance from their keeper in search of food.”

May we not infer from this account, that the north of ITALY was then much less peopled, and worse cultivated, than at present? How could these vast herds be fed in a country so thick of inclosures, so improved by agriculture, so divided by farms, so planted with vines and corn intermingled together? I must confess, that POLYBIUS's relation has more the air of that oeconomy which is to be met with in our AMERICAN colonies, than the management of an EUROPEAN country.

We meet with a reflection in ARISTOTLE's \* ethics, which seems to me unaccountable on any supposition, and by proving too much in favour of our present reasoning, may be thought really to prove nothing. That philosopher, treating of friendship, and observing, that that relation ought neither to be contracted to a very few, nor extended over a great multitude, illustrates his opinion by the following argument. “ In like  
 “ manner,” says he, “ as a city cannot subsist, if it either  
 “ have so few inhabitants as ten, or so many as a hundred

\* Lib. 9. cap. 10. His expression is αὐθροῦς, not πολῖτης; inhabitant, not citizen.



“ thousand; so is there a mediocrity required in the number  
 “ of friends; and you destroy the essence of friendship by  
 “ running into either extreme.” What! impossible that a  
 city can contain a hundred thousand inhabitants! Had ARIS-  
 TOTLE never seen nor heard of a city which was near so popu-  
 lous? This, I must own, passes my comprehension.

PLINY \* tells us, that SELEUCIA, the seat of the GREEK  
 empire in the East, was reported to contain 600,000 people.  
 CARTHAGE is said by STRABO † to have contained 700,000.  
 The inhabitants of PEKIN are not much more numerous.  
 LONDON, PARIS, and CONSTANTINOPLE, may admit of  
 nearly the same computation; at least, the two latter cities do  
 not exceed it. ROME, ALEXANDRIA, ANTIOCH, we have  
 already spoke of. From the experience of past and present  
 ages, one might conjecture, that there is a kind of impossibi-  
 lity, that any city could ever rise much beyond this proportion.  
 Whether the grandeur of a city be founded on commerce or  
 on empire, there seem to be invincible obstacles, which prevent  
 its farther progress. The seats of vast monarchies, by intro-  
 ducing extravagant luxury, irregular expence, idleness, de-  
 pendence, and false ideas of rank and superiority, are improper  
 for commerce. Extensive commerce checks itself, by raising  
 the price of all labour and commodities. When a great court  
 engages the attendance of a numerous nobility, possessed of  
 overgrown fortunes, the middling gentry remain in their pro-  
 vincial towns, where they can make a figure on a moderate  
 income. And if the dominions of a state arrive at an enormous  
 size, there necessarily arise many capitals, in the remoter pro-

\* Lib. 6. cap. 28.

† Lib. 17.

vinces, whither all the inhabitants except a few courtiers, repair, for education, fortune, and amusement \*. LONDON, by uniting extensive commerce and middling empire, has, perhaps, arrived at a greatness, which no city will ever be able to exceed.

Chuse DOVER or CALAIS for a center: Draw a circle of two hundred miles radius: You comprehend LONDON, PARIS, the NETHERLANDS, the UNITED PROVINCES, and some of the best cultivated counties of FRANCE and ENGLAND. It may safely, I think, be affirmed that no spot of ground can be found, in antiquity, of equal extent, which contained near so many great and populous cities, and was so stocked with riches and inhabitants. To balance, in both periods, the states, which possessed most art, knowlege, civility, and the best police, seems the truest method of comparison.

'Tis an observation of L'ABBE DU BOS, that † ITALY is warmer at present than it was in antient times. “ The annals of ROME tell us,” says he, “ that in the year 480 *ab U. C.* the winter was so severe that it destroyed the trees. The TYBER froze in ROME, and the ground was covered with snow for forty days. When JUVENAL ‡ describes a superstitious woman, he represents her as breaking the ice of the TYBER, that she might perform her ablutions.

\* Such were ALEXANDRIA, ANTIOCH, CARTHAGE, EPHEBUS, LYONS, &c. in the ROMAN empire. Such are even BOURDEAUX, THOLOUSE, DIJON, RENNES, ROUEN, AIX, &c. in FRANCE; DUBLIN, EDINBURGH, YORK, in the BRITISH dominions.

† Vol. 2. § 16.

‡ Sat. 6.

" *Hybernum fracta glacie descendet in amnem,*

" *Ter matutino Tyberi mergetur.*

" He speaks of that river's freezing as a common event.  
 " Many passages of HORACE suppose the streets of ROME  
 " full of snow and ice. We should have more certainty with  
 " regard to this point, had the ancients known the use of thermometers: But their writers, without intending it, give us  
 " information, sufficient to convince us, that the winters are  
 " now much more temperate at ROME than formerly. At present, the TYBER no more freezes at ROME than the NILE  
 " at CAIRO. The ROMANS esteem the winter very rigorous,  
 " if the snow lies two days, and if one sees for eight and  
 " forty hours a few icicles hang from a fountain that has a  
 " north exposition."

The observation of this ingenious critic may be extended to other EUROPEAN climates. Who could discover the mild climate of FRANCE in DIODORUS SICULUS's \* description of GAUL? " As it is a northern climate," says he, " it is infested with cold to an extreme degree. In cloudy weather,  
 " instead of rain, there fall great snows; and in clear weather  
 " it there freezes so excessive hard, that the rivers acquire  
 " bridges of their own substance, over which, not only single  
 " travellers may pass, but large armies, accompanied with all  
 " their baggage and loaded waggons. And there being many  
 " rivers in GAUL, the RHONE, the RHINE, &c. almost all  
 " of them are froze over; and 'tis usual, in order to prevent  
 " falling, to cover the ice with chaff and straw at the places

\* Lib. 4.

" where



“ where the road passes.” *Colder than a GALLIC Winter*, is used by PETRONIUS, as a proverbial expression.

North of the CEVENNES, says STRABO \*, GAUL produces not figs and olives: And the vines, which have been planted, bear not grapes, that will ripen.

OVID positively maintains, with all the serious affirmation of prose, that the EUXINE sea was frozen over every winter in his time; and he appeals to ROMAN governours, whom he names, for the truth of his assertion †. This seldom or never happens at present in the latitude of TOMI, whither OVID was banished. All the complaints of the same poet seem to mark a rigour of the seasons, which is scarce experienced at present in PETERSBURG or STOCKHOLM.

TOURNEFORT, a *Provençal*, who had travelled into the same countries, observes, that there is not a finer climate in the world: And he asserts, that nothing but OVID's melancholy could have given him such dismal ideas of it.

But the facts mentioned by that poet, are too circumstantial to bear any such interpretation.

POLYBIUS † says, that the climate in ARCADIA was very cold, and the air moist.

“ ITALY,” says VARRO ||, “ is the most temperate climate in EUROPE. The inland parts” (GAUL, GERMANY, and PANNONIA, no doubt) “ have almost perpetual winter.”

\* Lib. 4.

† *Trist.* lib. 3. eleg. 9. *De Ponto*, lib. 4. eleg. 7. 9, 10.

‡ Lib. 4. cap. 21.

|| Lib. 1. cap. 2.

The northern parts of SPAIN, according to STRABO\*, are but ill inhabited, because of the great cold.

Allowing, therefore, this remark to be just, that EUROPE is become warmer than formerly; how can we account for it? Plainly, by no other method, but by supposing, that the land is at present much better cultivated, and that the woods are cleared, which formerly threw a shade upon the earth, and kept the rays of the sun from penetrating to it. Our northern colonies in AMERICA become more temperate, in proportion as the woods are felled†; but in general, every one may remark, that cold still makes itself much more severely felt, both in North and South AMERICA, than in places under the same latitude in EUROPE.

SASERNA, quoted by COLUMELLA ‡, affirmed, that the disposition of the heavens was altered before his time, and that the air had become much milder and warmer; as appears hence, says he, that many places now abound with vineyards and olive plantations, which formerly, by reason of the rigour of the climate, could raise none of these productions. Such a change, if real, will be allowed an evident sign of the better cultivation and peopling of countries before the age of SASERNA ||; and if it be continued to the present times, is a proof,

\* Lib. 3.

† The warm southern colonies also become more healthful: And 'tis remarkable, that in the SPANISH histories of the first discovery and conquest of these countries, they appear to have been very healthful; being then well peopled and cultivated. No account of the sickness or decay of CORTES's or PIZZARRO's small armies.

‡ Lib. 1. cap. 1.

|| He seems to have lived about the time of the younger AFRICANUS; lib. 1. cap. 1.

that

that these advantages have been continually increasing throughout this part of the world.

Let us now cast our eye over all the countries which were the scene of antient and modern history, and compare their past and present situation: We shall not, perhaps, find such foundation for the complaint of the present emptiness and depopulation of the world. *ÆGYPT* is represented by *MAILLET*, to whom we owe the best account of it, as extremely populous; though he esteems the number of its inhabitants to be diminished. *SYRIA*, and the Lesser *ASIA*, as well as the coast of *BARBARY*, I can readily own, to be very desart in comparison of their antient condition. The depopulation of *GREECE* is also very obvious. But whether the country now called *TURKEY* in *EUROPE* may not, in general, contain as many inhabitants as during the flourishing period of *GREECE*, may be a little doubtful. The *THRACIANS* seem then to have lived like the *TARTARS* at present, by pasturage and plunder\*: The *GETES* were still more uncivilized†: And the *ILLYRIANS* were no better‡. These occupy nine tenths of that country: And though the government of the *TURKS* be not very favourable to industry and propagation; yet it preserves at least peace and order among the inhabitants; and is preferable to that barbarous, unsettled condition in which they antiently lived.

*POLAND* and *MUSCOVY* in *EUROPE* are not populous; but are certainly much more so than the antient *SARMATIA* and *SCYTHIA*; where no husbandry or tillage was ever heard of,

\* *Zenoph.* *exp.* lib. 7. *Polyb.* lib. 4. cap. 45.

† *Ovid. passim, &c.* *Strabo*, lib. 7. † *Polyb.* lib. 2. cap. 12.



and pasturage was the sole art by which the people were maintained. The like observation may be extended to DENMARK and SWEDEN. No one ought to esteem the immense swarms of people, which formerly came from the North, and over-ran all EUROPE, to be any objection to this opinion. Where a whole nation, or even half of it remove their seat, 'tis easy to imagine, what a prodigious multitude they must form; with what desperate valour they must make their attacks; and how the terror they strike into the invaded nations will make these magnify, in their imagination, both the courage and multitude of the invaders. SCOTLAND is neither extensive nor populous; but were the half of its inhabitants to seek new seats, they would form a colony as large as the TEUTONS and CIMBRI; and would shake all EUROPE, supposing it in no better condition for defence than formerly.

GERMANY has surely at present twenty times more inhabitants than in antient times, when they cultivated no ground, and each tribe valued itself on the extensive desolation which it spread around; as we learn from CÆSAR \*, and TACITUS †, and STRABO ‡. A proof, that the division into small republics will not alone render a nation populous, unless attended with the spirit of peace, order, and industry.

The barbarous condition of BRITAIN in former times is well known, and the thinness of its inhabitants may easily be conjectured, both from their barbarity, and from a circumstance mentioned by HERODIAN ||, that all BRITAIN was marshy,

\* *De bello Gallico*, lib. 6.

† *De moribus Germ.*

‡ Lib. 7.

|| Lib. 3. cap. 47.

even in SEVERUS's time, after the ROMANS had been fully settled in it above a whole century.

'Tis not easily imagined, that the GAULS were antiently much more advanced in the arts of life than their northern neighbours; since they travelled to this island for their education in the mysteries of the religion and philosophy of the DRUIDS \*. I cannot, therefore, think, that GAUL was then near so populous as FRANCE is at present.

Were we to believe, indeed, and join together the testimony of APPIAN, and that of DIODORUS SICULUS, we must admit an incredible populousness in GAUL. The former historian † says, that there were 400 nations in that country; the latter ‡ affirms, that the largest of the GALLIC nations consisted of 200,000 men, besides women and children, and the least of 50,000. Calculating, therefore, at a medium, we must admit of near 200 millions of people, in a country, which we esteem populous at present, though supposed to contain little more than twenty ||. Such calculations, therefore, by their extravagance lose all manner of authority. We may observe, that that equality of property, to which the populousness of antiquity may be ascribed, had no place among the GAULS †. Their intestine wars also, before CÆSAR's time, were almost perpetual †. And STRABO \*\* observes, that though all GAUL was cultivated, yet it was not cultivated with any skill or care; the genius of the inhabitants leading them less to arts

\* CÆSAR *de bello Gallico*; lib. 16. STRABO, lib. 7. says, the GAULS were not much more improved than the GERMANS.

† Celt. pars. 1.

‡ Lib. 5.

|| Antient GAUL was more extensive than modern FRANCE.

† *Cæsar de bello Gallico*; lib. 6.

‡ *Id. ibid.*

\*\* Lib. 4.

than

than arms, till their slavery to ROME produced peace among themselves.

CÆSAR \* enumerates very particularly the forces which were levied at BELGIUM to oppose his conquests; and makes them amount to 208,000. These were not the whole people able to bear arms in BELGIUM: For the same historian tells us, that the BELLOVACI could have brought a hundred thousand men into the field, though they engaged only for sixty. Taking the whole, therefore, in this proportion of ten to six, the sum of fighting men in all the states of BELGIUM was about 350,000; all the inhabitants a million and a half. And BELGIUM being about the fourth of GAUL, that country might contain six millions, which is not the third of its present inhabitants †. We are informed by CÆSAR, that the GAULS had no fixed property in land; but that the chieftains, when any death happened in a family, made a new division of all the lands among the several members of the family. This is the custom of *Tanistry*, which so long prevailed in IRELAND; and

\* *De bello Gallico*; lib. 2.

† It appears from CÆSAR's account, that the GAULS had no domestic slaves, who formed a different order from the *Plebes*. The whole common people were indeed a kind of slaves to the nobility, as the people of POLAND are at this day: And a nobleman of GAUL had sometimes ten thousand dependants of this kind. Nor can we doubt, that the armies were composed of the people as well as of the nobility: An army of 100,000 noblemen from a very small state is incredible. The fighting men amongst the HELVETII were the fourth part of the whole inhabitants; a clear proof that all the males of military age bore arms. See CÆSAR *de bello Gall.* lib. 1.

We may remark, that the numbers in CÆSAR's commentaries can be more depended on than those of any other antient author, because of the GREEK translation, which still remains, and which checks the LATIN original.

which



which retained that country in a state of misery, barbarism, and desolation.

The antient HELVETIA was 250 miles in length, and 180 in breadth, according to the same author \*; yet contained only 360,000 inhabitants. The canton of BERNE alone has, at present, as many people.

After this computation of APPIAN and DIODORUS SICULUS, I know not, whether I dare affirm, that the modern DUTCH are more numerous than the antient BATAVI.

SPAIN is decayed from what it was three centuries ago; but if we step backward two thousand years, and consider the restless, turbulent, unsettled condition of its inhabitants, we may probably be inclined to think, that it is now much more populous. Many SPANIARDS killed themselves when deprived of their arms by the ROMANS †. It appears from PLUTARCH ‡, that robbery and plunder were esteemed honourable among the SPANIARDS. HIRTIUS || represents in the same light the situation of that country in CÆSAR's time; and he says, that every man was obliged to live in castles and walled towns for his security. It was not till its final conquest under AUGUSTUS, that these disorders were repressed †. The account which STRABO \* and JUSTIN † give of SPAIN, corresponds exactly with those above mentioned. How much, therefore, must it diminish from our idea of the populousness of antiquity, when we find, that CICERO, comparing ITALY, AFRIC, GAUL, GREECE, and SPAIN, mentions the great

\* *De bello Gallico*; lib. 1.

† *Tit. Livii*; lib. 34. cap. 17.

‡ *Vell. Patenc.* lib. 2. § 90.

† *In vita Marii*.

\* Lib. 3.

|| *De bello. Hisp.*

† Lib. 44.

number of inhabitants, as the peculiar circumstance which rendered this latter country formidable \*.

ITALY, 'tis probable however, has decayed: But how many great cities does it still contain? VENICE, GENOA, PAVIA, TURIN, MILAN, NAPLES, FLORENCE, LEGHORN, which either subsisted not in antient times, or were then very inconsiderable? If we reflect on this, we shall not be apt to carry matters to so great an extreme as is usual, with regard to this subject.

When the ROMAN authors complain, that ITALY, which formerly exported corn, became dependant on all the provinces for its daily bread, they never ascribe this alteration to the increase of its inhabitants, but to the neglect of tillage and agriculture †. A natural effect of that pernicious practice of importing corn, in order to distribute it *gratis* among the ROMAN citizens, and a very bad means of multiplying the inhabitants of any country ‡. The *sportula*, so much talked of by MARTIAL and JUVENAL, being presents regularly made by the great lords to their smaller clients, must have had a like

\* “Nec numero Hispanos, nec robore Gallos, nec calliditate Pœnos, nec artibus Græcos, nec denique hoc ipso hujus gentis, ac terræ domestico nativoque sensu, Italos ipsos ac Latinos—superavimus.” *De harusp. resp.* cap. 9. The disorders of SPAIN seem to have been almost proverbial: “Nec impacatos a tergo horrebis Iberos.” *Virg. Georg.* lib. 3. The IBERI are here plainly taken, by a poetical figure, for robbers in general.

† VARRO *de re rustica*, lib. 2. præf. COLUMELLA præf. SUTTON. AUGUST. cap. 42.

‡ Though the observations of L'Abbé du Bos should be admitted, that ITALY is now warmer than in former times, the consequence may not be necessary, that it is more populous or better cultivated. If the other countries of EUROPE were more savage and woody, the cold winds that blew from them, might affect the climate of ITALY.

tendency to produce idleness, debauchery, and a continual decay among the people. The parish-rates have at present the same bad consequences in ENGLAND.

Were I to assign a period, when I imagine this part of the world might possibly contain more inhabitants than at present, I should pitch upon the age of TRAJAN and the ANTONINES; the great extent of the ROMAN empire being then civilized and cultivated, settled almost in a profound peace both foreign and domestic, and living under the same regular police and government ‡. But we are told, that all extensive govern-  
ments,

‡ The inhabitants of MARSEILLES lost not their superiority over the GAULS in commerce and the mechanic arts, till the ROMAN dominion turned the latter from arms to agriculture and civil life. See STRABO, lib. 4. That author, in several places, repeats the observation concerning the improvement arising from the ROMAN arts and civility: And he lived at the time when the change was new, and would be more sensible. So also PLINY: “ Quis enim non, communicato orbe terrarum, maiestate ROMANI imperii, profecisse vitam putet, commercio rerum ac societate festæ pacis, omniaque etiam, quæ occulta antea fuerant, in promiscuo usu facta. Lib. 14. præcæm. Numine deum electa (speaking of ITALY) quæ cælum ipsum clarius faceret, sparsa congregaret imperia, ritusque molliret, & tot populorum discordes, ferasque linguas sermonis commercio contraheret ad colloquia, & humanitatem homini daret; breviterque, una cunctarum gentium in toto orbe patria fieret;” lib. 2. cap. 5. Nothing can be stronger to this purpose than the following passage from TERTULLIAN, who lived about the age of SEVERUS. “ Certe quidem ipse orbis in promptu est, cultior de die & instructior pristino. Omnia jam pervia, omnia notæ, omnia negotiosa. Solitudines famosas retro fundi amenissimi obliteraverunt, silvas arva domuerunt, feras pecora fugaverunt; arenæ seruntur, saxa panguntur, paludes eliquantur, tantæ urbes, quantæ non casæ quondam. Jam nec insule horrent, nec scopuli terrent; ubique domus, ubique populus, ubique respublica, ubique vita. Summum testimonium frequentia humanæ, onerosi sumus mundo, vix nobis elementa sufficiunt; & necessitates arctiores, & quæ relæ apud omnes, dum jam nos natura non sustinet.” De anima, cap. 30. The air of rhetoric and declamation which appears in this passage, diminishes somewhat from its authority, but does not entirely destroy it. The same remark may be extended



ments, especially absolute monarchies, are destructive to population, and contain a secret vice and poison, which destroy the effect of all these promising appearances †. To confirm this, there is a passage cited from PLUTARCH ‡, which being somewhat singular, we shall here examine it.

tended to the following passage of ARISTIDES the sophist, who lived in the age of ADRIAN. “The whole world,” says he, addressing himself to the ROMANS, “seems to keep one holiday; and mankind, laying aside the sword which they formerly wore, now betake themselves to feasting and to joy. The cities, forgetting their antient contentions, preserve only one emulation, which shall embellish itself most by every art and ornament. Theatres every where arise, amphitheatres, porticoes, aqueducts, temples, schools, academies; and one may safely pronounce, that the sinking world has been raised by your auspicious empire. Nor have cities alone received an increase of ornament and beauty; but the whole earth, like a garden or paradise, is cultivated and adorned: Inasmuch, that such of mankind as are placed out of the limits of your empire (who are but few) seem to merit our sympathy and compassion.”

’Tis remarkable, that though DIODORUS SICULUS makes the inhabitants of ÆGYPT, when conquered by the ROMANS, amount only to three millions; yet JOSEPH. *de bello Jud.* lib. 2. cap. 16. says, that its inhabitants, excluding those of ALEXANDRIA, were seven millions and a half, in the reign of NERO: And he expressly says, that he drew this account from the books of the ROMAN publicans, who levied the poll-tax. STRABO, lib. 17. praises the superior police of the ROMANS with regard to the finances of ÆGYPT, above that of its former monarchs: And no part of administration is more essential to the happiness of a people. Yet we read in ATHENÆUS, (lib. 1. cap. 25.) who flourished during the reign of the ANTONINES, that the town MAREIA, near ALEXANDRIA, which was formerly a large city, had dwindled into a village. This is not, properly speaking, a contradiction. SUIDAS (AUGUST.) says, that the Emperor AUGUSTUS, having numbered the whole ROMAN empire, found it contained only 4,101,017 men (*αὐδοῦναι*). There is here surely some great mistake, either in the author or transcriber. But this authority, feeble as it is, may be sufficient to counterbalance the exaggerated accounts of HERODOTUS and DIODORUS SICULUS with regard to more early times.

† *L’Esprit des loix*, liv. 23. chap. 19.

‡ *De orac. dissectus*.

That author, endeavouring to account for the silence of many of the oracles, says, that it may be ascribed to the present desolation of the world, proceeding from former wars and factions; which common calamity, he adds, has fallen heavier upon GREECE than any other country; insomuch, that the whole could scarce at present furnish three thousand warriors; a number which, in the time of the MEDIAN war, were supplied by the single city of MEGARA. The gods, therefore, who affect works of dignity and importance, have suppressed many of their oracles, and deign not to use so many interpreters of their will to so diminutive a people.

I must confess, that this passage contains so many difficulties, that I know not what to make of it. You may observe, that PLUTARCH assigns, for a cause of the decay of mankind, not the extensive dominion of the ROMANS, but the former wars and factions of the several nations; all which were quieted by the ROMAN arms. PLUTARCH's reasoning, therefore, is directly contrary to the inference which is drawn from the fact he advances.

POLYBIUS supposes, that GREECE had become more prosperous and flourishing after the establishment of the ROMAN yoke\*; and though that historian wrote before these conquerors had degenerated, from being the patrons, to be the plun-

\* Lib. 2. cap. 62. It may perhaps be imagined, that POLYBIUS, being dependent on ROME, would naturally extol the ROMAN dominion. But, in the *first* place, POLYBIUS, though one sees sometimes instances of his caution, discovers no symptoms of flattery. *Secondly*, This opinion is only delivered in a single stroke, by the by, while he is intent upon another subject; and 'tis allowed, if there be any suspicion of an author's insincerity, that these oblique propositions discover his real opinion better than his more formal and direct assertions.

derers of mankind; yet as we find from TACITUS †, that the severity of the emperors afterwards checked the licence of the governors, we have no reason to think that extensive monarchy so destructive as it is so often represented.

We learn from STRABO ‡, that the ROMANS from their regard to the GREEKS, maintained, to his time, most of the privileges and liberties of that celebrated nation; and NERO afterwards rather increased them ||. How therefore can we imagine, that the ROMAN yoke was so burdensome over that part of the world? The oppression of the proconsuls was restrained; and the magistracies in GREECE being all bestowed, in the several cities, by the free votes of the people, there was no great necessity for the competitors to attend the emperor's court. If great numbers went to seek their fortunes in ROME, and advance themselves by learning or eloquence, the commodities of their native country, many of them would return with the fortunes which they had acquired, and thereby enrich the GRECIAN commonwealths.

But PLUTARCH says, that the general depopulation had been more sensibly felt in GREECE than in any other country. How is this reconcileable to its superior privileges and advantages?

Besides, this passage, by proving too much, really proves nothing. *Only three thousand men able to bear arms in all GREECE!* Who can admit so strange a proposition, especially if we consider the great number of GREEK cities, whose names still remain in history, and which are mentioned by

† *Annal.* lib. 1. cap. 2.

‡ *Lib.* 8. and 9.

§ PLUTARCH. *De his qui sero a Numine puniuntur.*



writers long after the age of PLUTARCH? There are surely ten times more people at present, when there scarce remains a city in all the bounds of antient GREECE. That country is still tolerably cultivated, and furnishes a sure supply of corn, in case of any scarcity in SPAIN, ITALY, or the south of FRANCE.

We may observe, that the antient frugality of the GREEKS, and their equality of property, still subsisted during the age of PLUTARCH; as appears from LUCIAN †. Nor is there any ground to imagine, that that country was possessed by a few masters, and a great number of slaves.

'Tis probable, indeed, that military discipline, being entirely useless, was extremely neglected in GREECE after the establishment of the ROMAN empire; and if these commonwealths, formerly so warlike and ambitious, maintained each of them a small city-guard, to prevent mobbish disorders, 'tis all they had occasion for: And these, perhaps, did not amount to 3000 men, throughout all GREECE. I own, that if PLUTARCH had this fact in his eye, he is here guilty of a very gross paralogism, and assign causes no wise proportioned to the effects. But is it so great a prodigy, that an author should fall into a mistake of this nature ‡?

But

† *De mercede conditis.*

‡ I must confess that that discourse of PLUTARCH, concerning the silence of the oracles, is in general of so odd a texture, and so unlike his other productions, that one is at a loss what judgment to form of it. 'Tis wrote in dialogue; which is a method of composition that PLUTARCH commonly little affects. The personages he introduces advance very wild, absurd, and contradictory opinions, more like the visionary systems or ravings of PLATO than the solid sense of PLUTARCH. There runs also through the whole an air of superstition and credulity which resembles very little

But whatever force may remain in this passage of PLUTARCH, we shall endeavour to counterbalance it by as remarkable a passage in DIODORUS SICULUS, where the historian, after mentioning NINUS's army of 1,700,000 foot and 200,000 horse, endeavours to support the credibility of this account by some posterior facts; and adds, that we must not form a notion of the antient populousness of mankind from the present emptiness and depopulation which is spread over the world\*. Thus an author, who lived at that very period of antiquity which is represented as most populous†, complains of the desolation which then prevailed, gives the preference to former times, and has recourse to antient fables as a foundation for his opinion. The humour of blaming the present, and admiring the past, is strongly rooted in human nature, and has an influence even on persons endued with the most profound judgment and most extensive learning.

the spirit that appears in other philosophical compositions of that author. For 'tis remarkable, that though PLUTARCH be an historian as superstitious as HERODOTUS or LIVY, yet there is scarcely, in all antiquity, a philosopher less superstitious, excepting CICERO and LUCIAN. I must therefore confess, that a passage of PLUTARCH, cited from this discourse, has much less authority with me, than if it had been found in most of his other compositions.

There is only one other discourse of PLUTARCH liable to like objections, *viz.* that concerning those whose punishment is delayed by the Deity. It is also wrote in dialogue, contains like superstitious, wild visions, and seems to have been chiefly composed in rivalry to PLATO, particularly his last book *de republica*.

And here I cannot but observe, that Mons. FONTENELLE, a writer eminent for candor, seems to have departed a little from his usual character, when he endeavours to throw a ridicule upon PLUTARCH on account of passages to be met with in this dialogue concerning oracles. The absurdities here put into the mouths of the several personages are not to be ascribed to PLUTARCH. He makes them refute each other; and, in general, he seems to intend the ridiculing of those very opinions, which FONTENELLE would ridicule him for maintaining. See *Histoires des oracles*.

\* Lib. 2. † He was cotemporary with CÆSAR and AUGUSTUS.

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## E S S A Y XII.

### OF THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT.

AS no party, in the present age, can support itself, without a philosophical or speculative system of principles, annexed to its political or practical one; we accordingly find, that each of the parties, into which this nation is divided, has reared up a fabric of the former kind, in order to protect and cover that scheme of actions, which it pursues. The people being commonly very rude builders, especially in this speculative way, and more especially still, when actuated by party-zeal; 'tis natural to imagine, that their workmanship must be a little unshapely, and discover evident marks of that violence and hurry, in which it was raised. The one party, by tracing up the origin of government to the DEITY, endeavour to render government so sacred and inviolate, that it must be little less than sacrilege, however disorderly it may become, to touch or invade it, in the smallest article. The other party, by founding government altogether on the consent of the PEOPLE, suppose that there is a kind of *original contract*, by which the subjects have reserved the power of resisting their sovereign whenever they find themselves aggrieved by that authority, with which they have, for certain purposes, voluntarily



tarily entrusted him. These are the speculative principles of the two parties; and these too are the practical consequences deduced from them.

I shall venture to affirm, *That both these systems of speculative principles are just; though not in the sense, intended by the parties: And That both the schemes of practical consequences are prudent; though not in the extremes, to which each party, in opposition to the other, has commonly endeavoured to carry them.*

That the DEITY is the ultimate author of all government, will never be denied by any who admits a general providence, and allows, that all events in the universe are conducted by an uniform plan, and directed to wise purposes. As 'tis impossible for human race to subsist, at least in any comfortable or secure state, without the protection of government; government must certainly have been intended by that beneficent Being, who means the good of all his creatures: And as it has universally, in fact, taken place, in all countries, and all ages; we may conclude, with still greater certainty, that it was intended by that omniscient Being, who can never be deceived by any event or operation. But since he gave rise to it, not by any particular or miraculous interposition, but by his concealed and universal efficacy; a sovereign cannot, properly speaking, be called his vicerent, in any other sense than every power or force, being derived from him, may be said to act by his commission. Whatever actually happens is comprehended in the general plan or intention of providence; nor has the greatest and most lawful prince any more reason, upon that account, to plead a peculiar sacredness or inviolable authority, than

than an inferior magistrate, or even an usurper, or even a robber and a pyrate. The same divine super-intendant, who, for wise purposes, invested an ELIZABETH or a HENRY \* with authority, did also, for purposes, no doubt, equally wise, though unknown, bestow power on a BORGIA or an ANGRIA. The same causes which gave rise to the sovereign power in every state, established likewise every petty jurisdiction in it, and every limited authority. A constable therefore, no less than a king, acts by a divine commission, and possesses an indefeasible right.

When we consider how nearly equal all men are in their bodily force, and even in their mental powers and faculties, till cultivated by education; we must necessarily allow, that nothing but their own consent could, at first, associate them together, and subject them to any authority. The people, if we trace government to its first origin in the woods and deserts, are the source of all power and jurisdiction, and voluntarily, for the sake of peace and order, abandoned their native liberty, and received laws from their equal and companion. The conditions, upon which they were willing to submit, were either express, or were so clear and obvious, that it might well be esteemed superfluous to express them. If this, then, be meant by the *original contract*, it cannot be denied, that all government is, at first, founded on a contract, and that the most antient rude combinations of mankind were formed entirely by that principle. In vain, are we sent to the records to seek for this charter of our liberties. It was not wrote on parchment, nor yet on leaves or barks of trees. It preceded the use of writing and all the other civilized arts of life. But

\* HENRY the 4th of FRANCE.

we trace it plainly in the nature of man, and in the equality, which we find in all the individuals of that species. The force, which now prevails, and which is founded on fleets and armies, is plainly political, and derived from authority, the effect of established government. A man's natural force consists only in the vigour of his limbs, and the firmness of his courage; which could never subject multitudes to the command of one. Nothing but their own consent, and their sense of the advantages of peace and order, could have had that influence.

But philosophers, who have embraced a party (if that be not a contradiction in terms) are not contented with these concessions. They assert, not only that government in its earliest infancy arose from consent, or the voluntary combination of the people; but also, that, even at present, when it has attained its full maturity, it rests on no other foundation. They affirm, that all men are still born equal, and owe allegiance to no prince or government, unless bound by the obligation and sanction of a *promise*. And as no man, without some equivalent, would forego the advantages of his native liberty, and subject himself to the will of another; this promise is always understood to be conditional, and imposes on him no obligation, unless he meets with justice and protection from his sovereign. These advantages the sovereign promises him in return; and if he fails in the execution, he has broke, on his part, the articles of engagement, and has thereby freed his subjects from all obligations to allegiance. Such, according to these philosophers, is the foundation of authority in every government; and such the right of resistance, possessed by every subject.



But would these reasoners look abroad into the world, they would meet with nothing that, in the least, corresponds to their ideas, or can warrant so refined and philosophical a theory. On the contrary, we find, every where, princes, who claim their subjects as their property, and assert their independent right of sovereignty, from conquest or succession. We find also, every where, subjects, who acknowledge this right in their princes, and suppose themselves born under obligations of obedience to a certain sovereign, as much as under the ties of reverence and duty to certain parents. These connexions are always conceived to be equally independent of our consent, in PERSIA and CHINA; in FRANCE and SPAIN; and even in HOLLAND and ENGLAND, wherever the doctrines above-mentioned have not been carefully inculcated. Obedience or subjection becomes so familiar, that most men never make any enquiry about its origin or cause, more than about the principle of gravity, resistance, or the most universal laws of nature. Or if curiosity ever move them; so soon as they learn, that they themselves and their ancestors have, for several ages, or from time immemorial, been subject to such a government or such a family; they immediately acquiesce, and acknowledge their obligation to allegiance. Were you to preach, in most parts of the world, that political connexions are founded altogether on voluntary consent or a mutual promise, the magistrate would soon imprison you, as seditious, for loosening the ties of obedience; if your friends did not before shut you up, as delirious, for advancing such absurdities. 'Tis strange, that an act of the mind, which every individual is supposed to have formed, and after he came to the use of reason too, otherwise it could have no authority; that this act, I say, should be so

unknown to all of them, that over the face of the whole earth there scarce remain any traces or memory of it.

But the contract, on which government is founded, is said to be the *original contract*; and consequently may be supposed too old to fall under the knowledge of the present generation. If the agreement, by which savage men first associated and conjoined their force, be here meant, this is acknowledged to be real; but being so antient, and being obliterated by a thousand changes of government and princes, it cannot now be supposed to retain any authority. If we would say any thing to the purpose, we must assert, that every particular government, which is lawful, and which imposes any duty of allegiance on the subject, was, at first, founded on consent and a voluntary compact. But besides that this supposes the consent of the fathers to bind the children, even to the most remote generations (which republican writers will never allow) besides this, I say, it is not justified by history or experience, in any age or country of the world.

Almost all the governments, which exist at present, or of which there remains any record in story, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest, or both, without any pretence of a fair consent, or voluntary subjection of the people. When an artful and bold man is placed at the head of an army or faction, 'tis often easy for him, by employing sometimes violence, sometimes false pretences, to establish his dominion over a people an hundred times more numerous than his partizans. He allows no such open communication, that his enemies can know, with certainty, their number or force. He gives them no leisure to assemble together in a body

to oppose him. Even all those, who are the instruments of his usurpation, may wish his fall; but their ignorance of each other's intention keeps them in awe, and is the sole cause of his security. By such arts as these, many governments have been established; and this is all the *original contract*, which they have to boast of.

The face of the earth is continually changing, by the increase of small kingdoms into great empires, by the dissolution of great empires into smaller kingdoms, by the planting of colonies, by the migration of tribes. Is there any thing discoverable in all these events, but force and violence? Where is the mutual agreement or voluntary association so much talked of?

Even the smoothest way, by which a nation may receive a foreign master, by marriage or a will, is not extremely honourable for the people; but supposes them to be disposed of, like a dowry or a legacy, according to the pleasure or interest of their rulers.

But where no force interposes, and election takes place; what is this election so highly vaunted? 'Tis either the combination of a few great men, who decide for the whole, and will allow of no opposition: Or 'tis the fury of a rabble, that follow a seditious ringleader, who is not known, perhaps, to a dozen among them, and who owes his advancement merely to his own impudence, or to the momentary caprice of his fellows.

Are these disorderly elections, which are rare too, of such mighty authority, as to be the only lawful foundation of all government and allegiance?

In



In reality, there is not a more terrible event, than a total dissolution of government, which gives liberty to the multitude, and makes the determination or choice of a new establishment depend upon a number which nearly approaches the body of the people: For it never comes entirely to the whole number of them. Every wise man, then, wishes to see, at the head of a powerful and obedient army, a general, who may speedily seize the prize, and give to the people a master, which they are so unfit to choose for themselves. So little correspondent is fact and reality to those philosophical notions.

Let not the establishment at the *revolution*, deceive us, or make us so much in love with a philosophical origin to government, as to imagine all others monstrous and irregular. Even that event was far from corresponding to these refined ideas. It was only the succession, and that only in the regal part of the government, which was then changed: And it was only the majority of seven hundred, who determined that change for near ten millions. I doubt not, indeed, but the bulk, of these ten millions acquiesced willingly in the determination: But was the matter left, in the least, to their choice? Was it not justly supposed to be, from that moment, decided, and every man punished, who refused to submit to the new sovereign? How otherways could the matter have ever been brought to any issue or conclusion?

The republic of ATHENS was, I believe, the most extensive democracy, which we read of in history: Yet if we make the requisite allowances for the women, the slaves, and the strangers, we shall find, that that establishment was not, at first, made, nor any law ever voted, by a tenth part of those  
who

## OF THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT.

who were bound to pay obedience to it. Not to mention the islands and foreign dominions, which the *ATHENIANS* claimed as theirs by right of conquest. And as 'tis well known, that popular assemblies in that city were always full of licence and disorder, notwithstanding the forms and laws by which they were checked: How much more disorderly must they be, where they form not the established constitution, but meet tumultuously on the dissolution of the antient government, in order to give rise to a new one? How chimerical must it be to talk of a choice in any such circumstances?

The *ACHÆANS* enjoyed the freest and most perfect democracy of all antiquity; yet they employed force to oblige some cities to enter into their league, as we learn from *POLYBIUS* \*.

*HARRY* the IVth and *HARRY* the VIIth of *ENGLAND*, had really no other title to the throne but a parliamentary election; yet they never would acknowledge it, for fear of weakening their authority. Strange! if the only real foundation of all authority be consent and promise.

'Tis in vain to say, that all governments are, or should be, at first, founded on popular consent, as much as the necessity of human affairs will admit. This favours entirely my pretension. I maintain, that human affairs never will admit of this consent; seldom of the appearance of it. But that conquest or usurpation, that is, in plain terms, force, by dissolving the antient governments, is the origin of almost all the new ones, which ever were established in the world. And that in the few cases, where consent may seem to have taken place, it was

\* *Lib. 2. cap. 38.*

commonly so irregular, so confined, or so much intermixed either with fraud or violence, that it cannot have any great authority.

My intention here is not to exclude the consent of the people from being one just foundation of government where it has place. It is surely the best and most sacred of any. I only pretend, that it has very seldom had place in any degree, and never almost in its full extent. And that therefore some other foundation of government must also be admitted.

Were all men possessed of so inflexible a regard to justice, that, of themselves, they would totally abstain from the properties of others; they had for ever remained in a state of absolute liberty, without subjection to any magistrates or political society: But this is a state of perfection, of which human nature is justly esteemed incapable. Again; were all men possessed of so just an understanding, as always to know their own interest, no form of government had ever been submitted to, but what was established on consent, and was fully canvassed by each member of the society: But this state of perfection is likewise much superior to human nature. Reason, history and experience shew us, that all political societies have had an origin much less accurate and regular; and were one to choose a period of time, when the people's consent was least regarded in public transactions, it would be precisely on the establishment of a new government. In a settled constitution, their inclinations are often studied; but during the fury of revolutions, conquests, and public convulsions, military force or political craft usually decides the controversy.

When



When a new government is established, by whatever means, the people are commonly dissatisfied with it, and pay obedience more from fear and necessity, than from any idea of allegiance or of moral obligation. The prince is watchful and jealous, and must carefully guard against every beginning or appearance of insurrection. Time, by degrees, removes all these difficulties, and accustoms the nation to regard, as their lawful or native princes, that family, whom, at first, they considered as usurpers or foreign conquerors. In order to found this opinion, they have no recourse to any notion of voluntary consent or promise, which, they know, never was, in this case, either expected or demanded. The original establishment was formed by violence, and submitted to from necessity. The subsequent administration is also supported by power, and acquiesced in by the people, not as a matter of choice, but of obligation. They imagine not, that their consent gives their prince a title: But they willingly consent, because they think, that, from long possession, he has acquired a title, independent of their choice or inclination.

Should it be said, that by living under the dominion of a prince, which one might leave, every individual has given a *tacit* consent to his authority, and promised him obedience; it may be answered, That such implied consent can only take place, where a man imagines, that the matter depends on his choice. But where he thinks (as all mankind do who are born under established governments) that by his birth he owes allegiance to a certain prince or certain government; it would be absurd to infer a consent or choice, which he expressly, in this case, renounces and abjures.

Can we seriously say, that a poor peasant or artizan has a free choice to leave his own country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives from day to day, by the small wages which he acquires? We may as well assert, that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master; though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean, and perish, the moment he leaves her.

What if the prince forbid his subjects to quit his dominions; as in TIBERIUS's time, it was regarded as a crime in a ROMAN knight that he had attempted to fly to the PARTHIANS, in order to escape the tyranny of that emperor\*? Or as the antient MUSCOVITES prohibited all travelling under pain of death? And did a prince observe, that many of his subjects were seized with the frenzy of transporting themselves to foreign countries, he would doubtless, with great reason and justice, restrain them, in order to prevent the depopulation of his own kingdom. Would he forfeit the allegiance of all his subjects, by so wise and reasonable a law? Yet the freedom of their choice is surely, in that case, ravished from them.

A company of men, who should leave their native country, in order to people some uninhabited region, might dream of recovering their native freedom; but they would soon find, that their prince still laid claim to them, and called them his subjects, even in their new settlement. And in this he would but act conformably to the common ideas of mankind.

The truest *tacit* consent of this kind, which is ever observed, is when a foreigner settles in any country, and is beforehand

\* TACIT. Ann. 6. cap. 14.

acquainted with the prince, and government, and laws, to which he must submit: Yet is his allegiance, though more voluntary, much less expected or depended on, than that of a natural born subject. On the contrary, his native prince still asserts a claim to him. And if he punishes not the renegade, when he seizes him in war with his new prince's commission; this clemency is not founded on the municipal law, which in all countries condemns the prisoner; but on the consent of princes, who have agreed to this indulgence, in order to prevent reprisals.

Suppose an usurper, after having banished his lawful prince and royal family, should establish his dominion for ten or a dozen years in any country, and should preserve such exact discipline in his troops, and so regular a disposition in his garrisons, that no insurrection had ever been raised, or even murmur heard, against his administration: Can it be asserted, that the people, who in their hearts abhor his treason, have tacitly consented to his authority, and promised him allegiance, merely because, from necessity, they live under his dominion? Suppose again their natural prince restored, by means of an army, which he assembles in foreign countries: They receive him with joy and exultation, and shew plainly with what reluctance they had submitted to any other yoke. I may now ask, upon what foundation the prince's title stands? Not on popular consent surely: For though the people willingly acquiesce in his authority, they never imagine, that their consent makes him sovereign. They consent; because they apprehend him to be already, by birth, their lawful sovereign. And as to that tacit consent, which may now be inferred from their living

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under his dominion, this is no more than what they formerly gave to the tyrant and usurper.

When we assert, that all lawful government arises from the people, we certainly do them a great deal more honour than they deserve, or even expect and desire from us. After the ROMAN dominions became too unwieldy for the republic to govern, the people, over the whole known world, were extremely grateful to AUGUSTUS for that authority, which, by violence, he had established over them; and they shewed an equal disposition to submit to the successor, whom he left them, by his last will and testament. It was afterwards their misfortune, that there never was, in one family, any long regular succession; but that their line of princes was continually broke, either by private assassination or public rebellion. The *praetorian* bands, on the failure of every family, set up one emperor; the legions in the East a second; those in GERMANY, perhaps, a third: And the sword alone could decide the controversy. The condition of the people, in that mighty monarchy, was to be lamented, not because the choice of the emperor was never left to them; for that was impracticable: But because they never fell under any succession of masters, who might regularly follow each other. As to the violence and wars and bloodshed, occasioned by every new settlement; those were not blameable, because they were inevitable.

The house of LANCASTER ruled in this island about sixty years; yet the partizans of the white rose seemed daily to multiply in ENGLAND. The present establishment has taken place during a still longer period. Have all views of right in another family been utterly extinguished; even though scarce

any

any man now alive had arrived at years of discretion, when it was expelled, or could have consented to its dominion, or have promised it allegiance? A sufficient indication surely of the general sentiment of mankind on this head. For we blame not the partizans of the abdicated family, merely on account of the long time, during which they have preserved their imaginary fidelity. We blame them for adhering to a family, which, we affirm, has been justly expelled, and which, from the moment the new settlement took place, had forfeited all title to authority.

But would we have a more regular, at least, a more philosophical refutation of this principle of an original contract or popular consent; perhaps, the following observations may suffice.

All *moral* duties may be divided into two kinds. The *first* are those, to which men are impelled by a natural instinct or immediate propensity, which operates in them, independent of all ideas of obligation, and of all views, either to public or private utility. Of this nature are, love of children, gratitude to benefactors, pity to the unfortunate. When we reflect on the advantage, which results to society from such humane instincts, we pay them the just tribute of moral approbation and esteem: But the person, actuated by them, feels their power and influence, antecedent to any such reflection.

The *second* kind of moral duties are such as are not supported by any original instinct of nature, but are performed entirely from a sense of obligation, when we consider the necessities of human society, and the impossibility of supporting it, if these duties;

duties were neglected. 'Tis thus *justice* or a regard to the property of others, *fidelity* or the observance of promises, become obligatory, and acquire an authority over mankind. For as 'tis evident, that every man loves himself better than any other person, he is naturally impelled to extend his acquisitions as much as possible; and nothing can restrain him in this propensity, but reflection and experience, by which he learns the pernicious effects of that licence, and the total dissolution of society, which must ensue from it. His original inclination, therefore, or instinct, is here checked and restrained by a subsequent judgment or observation.

The case is precisely the same with the political or civil duty of *allegiance*, as with the natural duties of justice and fidelity. Our primary instincts lead us, either to indulge ourselves in unlimited liberty, or to seek dominion over others: And 'tis reflection only, which engages us to sacrifice such strong passions to the interests of peace and order. A very small degree of experience and observation suffices to teach us, that society cannot possibly be maintained without the authority of magistrates, and that this authority must soon fall into contempt, where exact obedience is not payed to it. The observation of these general and obvious interests is the source of all allegiance, and of that moral obligation, which we attribute to it.

What necessity, therefore, is there to found the duty of *allegiance* or obedience to magistrates on that of *fidelity* or a regard to promises, and to suppose, that 'tis the consent of each individual, which subjects him to government; when it appears, that both allegiance and fidelity stand precisely on the same



foundation, and are both submitted to by mankind, on account of the apparent interests and necessities of human society? We are bound to obey our sovereign, 'tis said; because we have given a tacit promise to that purpose. But why are we bound to observe our promise? It must here be asserted, that the commerce and intercourse of mankind, which are of such mighty advantage, can have no security where men pay no regard to their engagements. In like manner, may it be said, that men could not live at all in society, at least in a civilized society, without laws and magistrates and judges, to prevent the encroachments of the strong upon the weak, of the violent upon the just and equitable. The obligation to allegiance being of like force and authority with the obligation to fidelity, we gain nothing by resolving the one into the other. The general interests or necessities of society are sufficient to establish both.

If the reason is asked of that obedience, which we are bound to pay to government, I readily answer: *because society could not otherwise subsist*: And this answer is clear and intelligible to all mankind. Your answer is, *because we should keep our word*. But besides, that no body, till trained in a philosophical system, can either comprehend or relish this answer: Besides this, I say, you find yourself embarrassed, when 'tis asked, *why we are bound to keep our word*? And you can give no other answer, but what would, immediately, without any circuit, have accounted for our obligation to allegiance.

But to whom is allegiance due? And who are our lawful sovereigns? This question is often the most difficult of any, and liable to infinite discussions. When people are so happy,  
that

that they can answer, *Our present sovereign, who inherits, in a direct line, from ancestors, that have governed us for many ages*; this answer admits of no reply; even though historians, in tracing up to the remotest antiquity the origin of that royal family, may find, as commonly happens, that its first authority was derived from usurpation and violence. 'Tis confess'd, that private justice or the abstinence from the properties of others, is a most cardinal virtue: Yet reason tells us, that there is no property in durable objects, such as lands or houses, when carefully examined in passing from hand to hand, but must, in some period, have been founded on fraud and injustice. The necessities of human society, neither in private nor public life, will allow of such an accurate enquiry: And there is no virtue or moral duty, but what may, with facility, be refined away, if we indulge a false philosophy, in sifting and scrutinizing it, by every captious rule of logic, in every light or position, in which it may be placed.

The questions with regard to private property have filled infinite volumes of law and philosophy, if in both we add the commentators to the original text; and in the end, we may safely pronounce, that many of the rules, there established, are uncertain, ambiguous, and arbitrary. The like opinion may be formed with regard to the successions and rights of princes and forms of government. Many cases, no doubt, occur, especially in the infancy of any government, which admit of no determination from the laws of justice and equity: And our historian RAPIN, allows, that the controversy between EDWARD the third and PHILIP de VALOIS was of this nature, and could be decided only by an appeal to heaven, that is, by war and violence.

Who

Who shall tell me, whether GERMANICUS or DRUSUS ought to have succeeded TIBERIUS, had he died, while they were both alive, without naming any of them for his successor? Ought the right of adoption to be received as equivalent to that of blood, in a nation, where it had the same effect in private families, and had already, in two instances, taken place in the public? Ought GERMANICUS to be esteemed the eldest son because he was born before DRUSUS; or the younger, because he was adopted after the birth of his brother? Ought the right of the elder to be regarded in a nation, where the eldest brother had no advantage in the succession of private families? Ought the ROMAN empire, at that time to be esteemed hereditary, because of two examples; or ought it, even so early, to be regarded as belonging to the stronger or present possessor, as being founded on so recent an usurpation?

COMMODUS mounted the throne after a pretty long succession of excellent emperors, who had acquired their title, not by birth, or public election, but by the fictitious rite of adoption. That bloody debauchee being murdered by a conspiracy suddenly formed between his wench and her gallant, who happened at that time to be *Prætorian Præfect*, these immediately deliberated about choosing a master to human kind, to speak in the style of those ages; and they cast their eyes on PERTINAX. Before the tyrant's death was known, the *Præfect* went secretly to that senator, who, on the appearance of the soldiers, imagined that his execution had been ordered by COMMODUS. He was immediately saluted emperor by the officer and his attendants; cheerfully proclaimed by the populace; unwillingly submitted to by the guards; formally recog-



nized by the senate; and passively received by the provinces and armies of the empire.

The discontent of the *Prætorian* bands soon broke out in a sudden sedition, which occasioned the murder of that excellent prince: And the world being now without a master and without government, the guards thought proper to set the empire formally to sale. JULIAN, the purchaser, was proclaimed by the soldiers, recognized by the senate, and submitted to by the people, and must also have been submitted to by the provinces, had not the envy of the legions begot opposition and resistance. PESCENNIUS NIGER in SYRIA elected himself emperor, gained the tumultuary consent of his army, and was attended with the secret good-will of the senate and people of ROME. ALBINUS in BRITAIN found an equal right to set up his claim; but SEVERUS, who governed PANNONIA, prevailed in the end above both of them. That able politician and warrior, finding his own birth and dignity too much inferior to the imperial crown, profest at first, an intention only of revenging the death of PERTINAX. He marched as general into ITALY, defeated JULIAN; and without our being able to fix any precise commencement even of the soldiers consent, he was from necessity acknowledged emperor by the senate and people; and fully established in his violent authority by subduing NIGER and ALBINUS †.

*Inter hæc Gordianus CÆSAR* (says CAPITOLINUS, speaking of another period) *sublatus a militibus, Imperator est appellatus, quia non erat alius in præsentia.* 'Tis to be remarked that GORDIAN was a boy of fourteen years of age.

† HERODIAN, lib. 2.

Frequent instances of a like nature occur in the history of the emperors; in that of ALEXANDER's successors; and of many other countries: Nor can any thing be more unhappy than a despotic government of that kind; where the succession is disjointed and irregular, and must be determined, on every occasion, by force or election. In a free government, the matter is often unavoidable, and is also much less dangerous. The interests of liberty may there frequently lead the people, in their own defence, to alter the succession of the crown. And the constitution, being compounded of parts, may still maintain a sufficient stability, by resting on the aristocratical or democratical members, though the monarchical be altered, from time to time, in order to accommodate it to the former.

In an absolute government, when there is no legal prince, who has a title to the throne, it may safely be determined to belong to the first occupier. Instances of this kind are but too frequent, especially in the eastern monarchies. When any race of princes expires, the will or destination of the last sovereign will be regarded as a title. Thus the edict of LEWIS the XIVth, who called the bastard princes to the succession in case of the failure of all the legitimate princes, would, in such an event, have some authority †. Thus the will of

CHARLES

\* 'Tis remarkable that in the remonstrance of the Duke of BOURBON and the legitimate princes, against this destination of LOUIS the XIVth, the doctrine of the *original contract* is insisted on, even in that absolute government. The FRENCH nation, say they, choosing HUGH CAPET and his posterity to rule over them and their posterity, where the former line fails, there is a tacit right reserved to choose a new royal family; and this right is invaded by calling the bastard princes to the throne, without the consent of the nation. But the Comte de BOULAINVILLIERS, who wrote in defence of the bastard princes, ridicules this notion of an original contract, especially

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CHARLES the second disposed of the whole SPANISH monarchy. The cession of the antient proprietor, especially when joined to conquest, is likewise esteemed a very good title. The general bond or obligation, which unites us to government, is the interest and necessities of society; and this obligation is very strong. The determination of it to this or that particular prince or form of government is frequently more uncertain and dubious. Present possession has considerable authority in these cases, and greater than in private property; because of the disorders which attend all revolutions and changes of government †.

We shall only observe, before we conclude, that though an appeal to general opinion may justly, in the speculative sciences of metaphysics, natural philosophy, or astronomy, be esteemed unfair and inconclusive; yet in all questions with regard to morals, as well as criticism, there is really no other standard, by which any controversy can ever be decided. And nothing is a clearer proof that a theory of this kind is erroneous, than to find, that it leads to paradoxes, which are repugnant to the common sentiments of mankind, and to general practice and opinion. The doctrine, which founds all lawful government

when applied to HUGH CAPET; who mounted the throne, says he, by the same arts, which have ever been employed by all conquerors and usurpers. He got his title, indeed, recognized by the states after he had put himself in possession: But is this a choice or contract? The Comte de BOULAINVILLIERS, we may observe, was a noted republican; but being a man of learning, and very conversant in history, he knew the people were almost never consulted in these revolutions and new establishments, and that time alone bestowed right and authority on what was commonly at first founded on force and violence. See *Etat de la FRANCE*, Vol. III.

† The crime of rebellion, amongst the antients was commonly marked by the terms *viu tegeiv, novus res moliri.*



on an *original contract*, or consent of the people, is plainly of this kind; nor has the ablest of its partizans, in prosecution of it, scrupled to affirm, *that absolute monarchy is inconsistent with civil society, and so can be no form of civil government at all*†; and *that the supreme power in a state cannot take from any man, by taxes and impositions, any part of his property, without his own consent or that of his representatives*‡. What authority any moral reasoning can have, which leads to opinions so wide of the general practice of mankind, in every place but this single kingdom, 'tis easy to determine ||.

† See LOCKE on government, chap. 7. § 90.

‡ Id. chap. 11. § 138, 139, 140.

|| The only passage I meet with in antiquity, where the obligation of obedience to government is ascribed to a promise is in PLATO in *Critone*; where SOCRATES refuses to escape from prison, because he had tacitly promised to obey the laws. Thus he builds a *tory* consequence of passive obedience, on a *wbig* foundation of the original contract.

New discoveries are not to be expected in these matters. If no man, till very lately, ever imagined that government was founded on contract, 'tis certain it cannot, in general, have any such foundation.

## E S S A Y XIII.

## OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE.

I N the former essay, we endeavoured to refute the *speculative* systems of politics advanced in this nation; as well the religious system of the one party, as the philosophical of the other. We come now to examine the *practical* consequences, deduced by each party, with regard to the measures of submission due to sovereigns.

As the obligation to justice is founded intirely on the interests of society, which require mutual abstinence from property, in order to preserve peace among mankind; 'tis evident, that, when the execution of justice would be attended with very pernicious consequences, that virtue must be suspended, and give place to public utility, in such extraordinary and such pressing emergencies. The maxim, *fiat Justitia & ruat Cælum*, let justice be performed, though the universe be destroyed, is apparently false, and by sacrificing the end to the means, shews a preposterous idea of the subordination of duties. What governor of a town makes any scruple of burning the suburbs, when they facilitate the advances of the enemy? Or what general abstains from plundering a neutral country, when the necessities of war require it, and he cannot otherwise maintain his army? The case is the same with the duty of allegiance;

giance; and common sense teaches us, that as government binds us to obedience only on account of its tendency to public utility, that duty must always, in extraordinary cases, when public ruin would evidently attend obedience, yield to the primary and original obligation. *Salus populi suprema Lex*, the safety of the people is the supreme law. This maxim is agreeable to the sentiments of mankind in all ages: Nor is any one, when he reads of the insurrections against a NERO, or a PHILIP, so infatuated with party-systems, as not to wish success to the enterprize, and praise the undertakers. Even our high monarchical party, in spite of their sublime theory, are forced, in such cases, to judge, and feel, and approve, in conformity to the rest of mankind.

Resistance, therefore, being admitted in extraordinary emergencies, the question can only be, among good reasoners, with regard to the degree of necessity, which can justify resistance, and render it lawful or commendable. And here I must confess, that I shall always incline to *their* side, who draw the bond of allegiance the closest possible, and consider an infringement of it, as the last refuge in desperate cases, when the public is in the highest danger, from violence and tyranny. For besides the mischiefs of a civil war, which commonly attends insurrection; 'tis certain, that where a disposition to rebellion appears among any people, it is one chief cause of tyranny in the rulers, and forces them into many violent measures, which they never would have embraced, had every one seemed inclined to submission and obedience. 'Tis thus the *tyrannicide* or assassination, approved of by antient maxims, instead of keeping tyrants and usurpers in awe, made them ten times more fierce and unrelenting; and is now justly, upon that



that account, abolished by the laws of nations, and universally condemned as a base and treacherous method of bringing to justice these disturbers of society.

Besides, we must consider, that as obedience is our duty in the common course of things, it ought chiefly to be inculcated; nor can any thing be more preposterous than an anxious care and sollicitude in stating all the cases, in which resistance may be allowed. Thus, though a philosopher reasonably acknowledges, in the course of an argument, that the rules of justice may be dispensed with in cases of urgent necessity; what should we think of a preacher or casuist, who should make it his chief study to find out such cases, and enforce them with all the vehemence of argument and eloquence? Would he not be better employed in inculcating the general doctrine, than in displaying the particular exceptions, which we are, perhaps, but too much inclined, of ourselves, to embrace, and to extend?

There are, however, two reasons, which may be pleaded in defence of that party among us, who have, with so much industry, propagated the maxims of resistance; maxims, which, it must be confessed, are, in general, so pernicious, and so destructive of civil society. The *first* is, that their antagonists carrying the doctrine of obedience to such an extravagant height, as not only never to mention the exceptions in extraordinary cases (which might, perhaps, be excusable) but even positively to exclude them; it became necessary to insist on these exceptions, and defend the rights of injured truth and liberty. The *second*, and, perhaps, better reason, is founded on the nature of the BRITISH constitution and form of government.

'Tis almost peculiar to our constitution to establish a first magistrate with such high pre-eminence and dignity, that though limited by the laws, he is, in a manner, so far as regards his own person, above the laws, and can neither be questioned nor punished for any injury or wrong, which may be committed by him. His ministers alone, or those who act by his commission, are obnoxious to justice; and while the prince is thus allured, by the prospect of personal safety, to give the laws their free course, an equal security is, in effect, obtained, by the punishment of lesser offenders, and at the same time a civil war is avoided, which would be the infallible consequence, were an attack, at every turn, made directly upon the sovereign. But though the constitution pays this salutary compliment to the prince, it can never reasonably be understood, by that maxim, to have determined its own destruction, or to have established a tame submission, where he protects his ministers, perseveres in injustice, and usurps the whole power of the commonwealth. This case, indeed, is never expressly put by the laws; because it is impossible for them, in their ordinary course, to provide a remedy for it, or establish any magistrate, with superior authority, to chastise the exorbitancies of the prince. But as a right without a remedy would be the greatest of all absurdities; the remedy, in this case, is the extraordinary one of resistance, when affairs come to that extremity, that the constitution can be defended by it alone. Resistance, therefore, must, of course, become more frequent in the BRITISH government, than in others, which are simpler, and consist of fewer parts and movements. Where the king is an absolute sovereign, he has little temptation to commit such enormous tyranny as may justly provoke rebellion: But where he is limited, his imprudent ambition, without any great

vices, may run him into that perilous situation. This is commonly supposed to have been the case with CHARLES the First; and if we may now speak truth, after animosities are laid, this was also the case with JAMES the Second. These were harmless, if not, in their private character, good men; but mistaking the nature of our constitution, and engrossing the whole legislative power, it became necessary to oppose them with some vehemence; and even to deprive the latter formally of that authority, which he had used with such imprudence and indiscretion.



## E S S A Y XIV.

## OF THE COALITION OF PARTIES.

**T**O abolish all distinctions of party may not be practicable, perhaps not desirable, in a free government. The only parties, which are dangerous, are such as entertain opposite views with regard to the essentials of government, the succession of the crown, or the more considerable privileges belonging to the several members of the constitution; where there is no room for any compromise or accommodation, and where the controversy may appear so momentous as to justify even an opposition by arms to the pretensions of antagonists. Of this nature was the animosity continued for above a century between the parties in ENGLAND; an animosity which broke out sometimes into civil war, which occasioned violent revolutions, and which continually endangered the peace and tranquillity of the nation. But as there has appeared of late the strongest symptoms of an universal desire to abolish these party distinctions; this tendency to a coalition affords the most agreeable prospect of future happiness, and ought to be carefully cherished and promoted by every lover of his country.

There is not a more effectual method of promoting so good an end, than to prevent all unreasonable insult and triumph of the one party over the other, to encourage moderate opinions,

to find the proper medium in all disputes, to persuade each that its antagonist may possibly be sometimes in the right, and to keep a balance in the praise and blame which we bestow on either side. The two former Essays, concerning the *original contract* and *passive obedience*, are calculated for this purpose with regard to the *philosophical* controversies between the parties, and tend to show that neither side are in these respects so fully supported by reason as they endeavour to flatter themselves. We shall proceed to exercise the same moderation with regard to the *historical* disputes, by proving that each party was justified by plausible topics; that there were on both sides wise men who meant well to their country; and that the past animosity between the factions had no better foundation than narrow prejudice or interested passion.

The popular party, who afterwards acquired the name of whigs, might justify by very specious arguments, that opposition to the crown, from which our present free constitution is derived. Though obliged to acknowledge, that precedents in favour of prerogative had uniformly taken place during many reigns before CHARLES the First, they thought, that there was no reason for submitting any longer to so dangerous an authority. Such might have been their reasoning: The rights of mankind are so sacred, that no prescription of tyranny or arbitrary power can have authority sufficient to abolish them. Liberty is the most inestimable of all blessings; and wherever there appears any probability of recovering it, a nation may willingly run many hazards, and ought not even to repine at the greatest effusion of blood or dissipation of treasure. All human institutions, and none more than government, are in continual fluctuation. Kings are sure to embrace every opportunity

opportunity of extending their prerogatives; And if favourable incidents be not also laid hold of to extend and secure the privileges of the people, an universal despotism must for ever prevail among mankind. The example of all the neighbouring nations prove, that it is no longer safe to entrust with the crown the same exorbitant prerogatives which had formerly been exercised during rude and simple ages. And though the example of many late reigns may be pleaded in favour of a power in the prince somewhat arbitrary, more remote reigns afford instances of stricter limitations imposed on the crown; and those pretensions of the parliament, now branded with the title of innovations, are only a recovery of the just rights of the people.

These views, far from being odious, are surely large, and generous, and noble: To their prevalence and success the kingdom owes its liberty; perhaps its learning, its industry, commerce, and naval power: By them chiefly the ENGLISH name is distinguished among the society of nations, and aspires to a rivalry with that of the freest and most illustrious commonwealths of antiquity. But as all these mighty consequences could not reasonably be foreseen at the time when the contest began, the royalists of that age wanted not specious arguments on their side, by which they could justify their defence of the then established prerogatives of the crown. We shall state the question, as it might appear to them at the assembling of that parliament, which by their violent encroachments on the crown, began the civil wars.

The only rule of government, they might have said, known and acknowledged among men, is use and practice: Reason



is so uncertain a guide that it will always be exposed to doubt and controversy: Could it ever render itself prevalent over the people, men had always retained it as their sole rule of conduct: They had still continued in the primitive, unconnected state of nature, without submitting to political government, whose sole basis is, not pure reason, but authority and precedent. Dissolve these ties, you break all the bonds of civil society, and leave every man at liberty to consult his particular interest, by those expedients, which his appetite, disguised under the appearance of reason, shall dictate to him. The spirit of innovation is in itself pernicious, however favourable its particular object may sometimes appear: A truth so obvious, that the popular party themselves are sensible of it, and therefore cover their encroachments on the crown by the plausible pretence of their recovering the antient liberties of the people.

But the present prerogatives of the crown, allowing all the suppositions of that party, have been incontestably established ever since the accession of the house of TUDOR; a period, which, as it now comprehends an hundred and sixty years, may be allowed sufficient to give stability to any constitution. Would it not have appeared ridiculous, in the reign of the Emperor ADRIAN, to talk of the constitution of the republic as the rule of government; or to suppose that the former rights of the senate, and consuls and tribunes were still subsisting?

But the present claims of the ENGLISH monarchs are infinitely more favourable than those of the ROMAN emperors during that age. The authority of AUGUSTUS was a plain usurpation,

usurpation, grounded only on military violence, and forms such an æra in the ROMAN history, as is obvious to every reader. But if HENRY VII. really, as some pretend, enlarged the power of the crown, it was only by insensible acquisitions, which escaped the apprehension of the people, and have scarcely been remarked even by historians and politicians. The new government, if it deserves the name, is an imperceptible transition from the former; is entirely engrafted on it; derives its title fully from that root; and is to be considered only as one of those gradual revolutions, to which human affairs, in every nation, will be for ever subject.

The house of TUDOR, and after them that of STUART, exercised no prerogatives, but what had been claimed and exercised by the PLANTAGENETS. Not a single branch of their authority can be said to be altogether an innovation. The only difference is, that perhaps the more antient kings exerted these powers only by intervals, and were not able, by reason of the opposition of their barons, to render them so steady a rule of administration\*. But the sole inference from this fact is, that those times were more turbulent and seditious; and that royal authority, the constitution, and the laws have happily of late gained the ascendant.

Under what pretence can the popular party now talk of recovering the antient constitution? The former controul over

\* The author believes that he was the first writer who advanced that the family of TUDOR possessed in general more authority than their immediate predecessors: An opinion, which, he hopes, will be supported by history, but which he proposes with some diffidence. There are strong symptoms of arbitrary power in some former reigns even after signing of the charters. The power of the crown in that age depended less on the constitution than on the capacity and vigour of the prince who wore it.

the kings was not placed in the commons, but in the barons : The people had no authority, and even little or no liberty, till the crown, by suppressing these factious tyrants, enforced the execution of the laws, and obliged all the subjects equally to respect each others rights, privileges, and properties. If we must return to the antient barbarous and GOTHIC constitution ; let those gentlemen, who now behave themselves with so much insolence to their sovereign, set the first example. Let them make court to be admitted as retainers to a neighbouring baron ; and by submitting to slavery under him, acquire some protection to themselves ; together with the power of exercising rapine and oppression over their inferior slaves and villains. This was the condition of the commons among their remote ancestors.

But how far back shall we go, in having recourse to antient constitutions and governments ? There was a constitution still more antient than that to which these innovators affect so much to appeal. During that period there was no *magna charta* : The barons themselves possessed few regular, stated privileges : And the house of commons probably had not an existence.

It is pleasant to hear a house, while they are usurping the whole power of government, talk of reviving antient institutions. Is it not known, that, though the representatives received wages from their constituents ; to be a member of their house was always considered as a burthen, and a freedom from it as a privilege ? Will they persuade us, that power, which of all human acquisitions is the most coveted, and in comparison of which even reputation and pleasure and riches are slighted, could ever be regarded as a burthen by any man ?



The property acquired of late by the commons, it is said, entitles them to more power than their ancestors enjoyed. But to what is this encrease of their property owing, but to an encrease of their liberty and their security? Let them therefore acknowledge, that their ancestors, while the crown was restrained by the seditious barons, really enjoyed less liberty than they themselves have attained, after the sovereign acquired the ascendant: And let them enjoy that liberty with moderation; and not forfeit it by new exorbitant claims, and by rendering it a pretence for endless innovations.

The true rule of government is the present established practice of the age. That has most authority, because it is recent: It is also better known, for the same reason. Who has assured those tribunes, that the PLANTAGENETS did not exercise as high acts of authority as the TUDORS? The historians, they say, do not mention them. But the historians are also silent with regard to the chief exertions of prerogative by the TUDORS. Where any power or prerogative is fully and undoubtedly established, the exercise of it passes for a thing of course, and readily escapes the notice of history and annals. Had we no other monuments of ELIZABETH's reign, than what are preserved even by CAMDEN, the most copious, judicious, and exact of our historians, we should be entirely ignorant of the most important maxims of her government.

Was not the present monarchical government, to its full extent, authorized by lawyers, recommended by divines, acknowledged by politicians, acquiesced in, nay passionately cherished, by the people in general; and all this during a period of at least a hundred and sixty years, and till of late, without the

least murmur or controversy? This general consent surely, during so long a time, must be sufficient to render a constitution legal and valid. If the origin of all power be derived, as is pretended, from the people; here is their consent in the fullest and most ample terms that can be desired or imagined.

But the people must not pretend, because they can, by their consent, lay the foundations of government, that therefore they are to be permitted, at their pleasure, to overthrow and subvert them. There is no end of these seditious and arrogant claims. The power of the crown is now openly struck at: The nobility are also in visible peril: The gentry will soon follow: The popular leaders, who will then assume the name of gentry, will next be exposed to danger: And the people themselves, having become incapable of civil government, and lying under the restraint of no authority, must, for the sake of peace, admit, instead of their legal and mild monarchs, a succession of military and despotic tyrants.

These consequences are the more to be dreaded, as the present fury of the people, though glossed over by pretensions to civil liberty, is in reality incited by the fanaticism of religion; a principle the most blind, headstrong and ungovernable, by which human nature can ever possibly be actuated. Popular rage is dreadful from whatever motive derived: But must be attended with the most pernicious consequences, when it arises from a principle, which disclaims all controul by human law, reason, or authority.

These are the arguments, which each party may make use of to justify the conduct of their predecessors, during that great crisis. The event has shown, that the reasonings of the

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popular party were better founded; but perhaps, according to the established maxims of lawyers and politicians, the views of the royalists ought, beforehand, to have appeared more solid, more safe, and more legal. But this is certain, that the greater moderation we now employ in representing past events; the nearer we shall be to produce a full coalition of the parties, and an entire acquiescence in our present happy establishment. Moderation is of advantage to every establishment: Nothing but zeal can overturn a settled power: And an over-active zeal in friends is apt to beget a like spirit in antagonists. The transition from a moderate opposition against an establishment, to an entire acquiescence in it, is easy and insensible.

There are many invincible arguments, which should induce the malecontent party to acquiesce entirely in the present settlement of the constitution. They now find, that the spirit of civil liberty, though at first connected with religious fanaticism, could purge itself from that pollution, and appear under a more genuine and engaging aspect; a friend to toleration, and an encourager of all the enlarged and generous sentiments that do honour to human nature. They may observe, that the popular claims could stop at a proper period; and after retrenching the exorbitant prerogatives of the crown, could still maintain a due respect to monarchy, to nobility, and to all antient institutions. Above all, they must be sensible, that the very principle, which made the strength of their party, and from which it derived its chief authority, has now deserted them, and gone over to their antagonists. The plan of liberty is settled; its happy effects are proved by experience; a long tract of time has given it stability; and whoever would at-



tempt to overturn it, and to recall the past government or abdicated family, would, besides other more criminal imputations, be exposed in their turn to the reproach of faction and innovation. While they peruse the history of past events, they ought to reflect, both that the rights of the crown are long since annihilated, and that the tyranny, and violence, and oppression, to which they often gave rise, are ills, from which the established liberty of the constitution has now at last happily protected the people. These reflections will prove a better security to our freedom and privileges, than to deny, contrary to the clearest evidence of facts, that such regal powers ever had any existence. There is not a more effectual method of betraying a cause, than to lay the stress of the argument on a wrong place, and by disputing an untenable point, ensure the adversaries to success and victory.

## E S S A Y XV.

## OF THE PROTESTANT SUCCESSION.

I SUPPOSE, that a member of parliament, in the reign of King WILLIAM or QUEEN ANNE, while the establishment of the *Protestant Succession* was yet uncertain, were deliberating concerning the party he would chuse in that important question, and weighing with impartiality, the advantages and disadvantages on each side. I believe the following particulars would have entered into his consideration.

He would easily perceive the great advantages resulting from the restoration of the STUART family; by which we should preserve the succession clear and undisputed, free from a pretender, with such a specious title as that of blood, which, with the multitude, is always the claim, the strongest and most easily comprehended. 'Tis in vain to say, as many have done, that the question with regard to *governors*, independent of *government*, is frivolous, and little worth disputing, much less fighting about. The generality of mankind never will enter into these sentiments; and 'tis much happier, I believe, for society, that they do not, but rather continue in their natural prejudices and prepossessions. How could stability be preserved in any monarchical government, (which, though perhaps,

haps, not the best, is, and always has been, the most common of any) unless men had so passionate a regard for the true heir of their royal family; and even though he be weak in understanding, or infirm in years, gave him so great a preference above persons the most accomplished in shining talents, or celebrated for great achievements? Would not every popular leader put in his claim at every vacancy, or even without any vacancy; and the kingdom become the theatre of perpetual wars and convulsions? The condition of the ROMAN empire, surely, was not, in this respect, much to be envied; nor is that of the *Eastern* nations, who pay little regard to the title of their sovereigns, but sacrifice them, every day, to the caprice or momentary humour of the populace or soldiery. 'Tis but a foolish wisdom, which is so carefully displayed, in undervaluing princes, and placing them on a level with the meanest of mankind. To be sure, an anatomist finds no more in the greatest monarch than in the lowest peasant or day-labourer; and a moralist may, perhaps, frequently find less. But what do all these reflections tend to? We, all of us, still retain these prejudices in favour of birth and family; and neither in our serious occupations, nor most careless amusements, can we ever get entirely rid of them. A tragedy, that should represent the adventures of sailors, or porters, or even of private gentlemen, would presently disgust us; but one that introduces kings and princes, acquires in our eyes an air of importance and dignity. Or should a man be able, by his superior wisdom, to get entirely above such prepossessions, he would soon, by means of the same wisdom, again bring himself down to them, for the sake of society, whose welfare he would perceive to be intimately connected with them. Far from endeavouring to undeceive the people in this

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particular, he would cherish such sentiments of reverence to their princes; as requisite to preserve a due subordination in society. And though the lives of twenty thousand men be often sacrificed to maintain a king in the possession of his throne, or preserve the right of succession undisturbed, he entertains no indignation at the loss, on pretence that every individual of these was, perhaps, in himself, as valuable as the prince he served. He considers the consequences of violating the hereditary rights of kings: Consequences, which may be felt for many centuries; while the loss of several thousand men brings so little prejudice to a large kingdom, that it may not be perceived a few years afterwards.

The advantages of the HANOVER succession are of an opposite nature, and arise from this very circumstance, that it violates hereditary right; and places on the throne a prince, to whom birth gave no title to that dignity. 'Tis evident to any who considers the history of this island, that the privileges of the people have, during the two last centuries, been continually upon the increase, by the division of the church-lands, by the alienations of the barons estates, by the progress of trade, and above all, by the happiness of our situation, which, for a long time, gave us sufficient security, without any standing army or military establishment. On the contrary, public liberty has, almost in every other nation of EUROPE, been, during the same period, extremely upon the decline; while the people were disgusted at the hardships of the old feudal militia, and chose rather to intrust their prince with mercenary armies, which he easily turned against themselves. It was nothing extraordinary, therefore, that some of our BRITISH sovereigns mistook the nature of the constitution, and genius of the people; and as they embraced all the favourable precedents left them

by their ancestors, they overlooked all those which were contrary, and which supposed a limitation in our government. They were encouraged in this mistake, by the example of all the neighbouring princes, who bearing the same title or appellation, and being adorned with the same ensigns of authority, naturally led them to claim the same powers and prerogatives\*. The flattery of courtiers farther blinded them; and  
above

\* It appears from the speeches, and proclamations, and whole train of King JAMES I.'s actions, as well as his son's, that they considered the ENGLISH government as a simple monarchy, and never imagined that any considerable part of their subjects entertained a contrary idea. This made them discover their pretensions, without preparing any force to support them; and even without reserve or disguise, which are always employed by those, who enter upon any new project, or endeavour to innovate in any government. King JAMES told his parliament plainly, when they meddled in state affairs, *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. He used also, at his table, in promiscuous companies, to advance his notions, in a manner still more undisguised: As we may learn from a story told in the life of Mr. WALLER, and which that poet used frequently to repeat. When Mr. WALLER was young, he had the curiosity to go to court; and he stood in the circle, and saw King JAMES dine, where, amongst other company, there sat at table two bishops. The King, openly and aloud, proposed this question, *Whether he might not take his subjects money, when he had occasion for it, without all this formality of parliament?* The one bishop readily replied, *God forbid you should not: For you are the breath of our nostril*. The other bishop declined answering, and said he was not skilled in parliamentary cases: But upon the King's urging him, and saying he would admit of no evasion, his lordship replied very pleasantly, *Why, then, I think your majesty may lawfully take my brother's money: For he offers it*. In Sir WALTER RALEIGH's preface to the History of the World, there is this remarkable passage. PHILIP II. *by strong hand and main force, attempted to make himself not only an absolute monarch over the Netherlands, like unto the kings and soverieigns of England and France; but Turk-like, to tread under his feet all their natural and fundamental laws, privileges, and antient rights*. SPENSER, speaking of some grants of the ENGLISH kings to the IRISH corporations, says, "All which, though, at the time of their first grant, they were tolerable, and perhaps reasonable, yet now are most unreasonable and inconvenient. But all these will easily be cut off with the superior power of her majesty's prerogative, against which her own grants are not to be pleaded or enforced." *State of IRELAND*, p. 1537. Edit. 1705.

above all, that of the clergy, who from several passages of *scripture*, and these wrested too, had erected a regular and avowed system of tyranny and despotic power. The only method of destroying, at once, all these exorbitant claims and pretensions, was to depart from the true hereditary line, and choose a prince, who, being plainly a creature of the public, and receiving the crown on conditions, expressed and avowed, found his authority established on the same bottom with the privileges of the people. By electing him in the royal line, we cut off all hopes of ambitious subjects, who might, in future emergencies, disturb the government by their cabals and pretensions: By rendering the crown hereditary in his family, we avoided all the inconveniencies of elective monarchy: And by excluding the lineal heir, we secured all our constitutional limitations, and rendered our government uniform and of a piece. The people cherish monarchy, because protected by it: The monarch favours liberty, because created by it. And thus every advantage is obtained by the new establishment, as far as human skill and wisdom can extend itself.

These are the separate advantages of fixing the succession, either in the house of STUART, or in that of HANOVER. There are also disadvantages in each establishment, which an impartial patriot would ponder and examine, in order to form a just judgment upon the whole.

The disadvantages of the protestant succession consist in the foreign dominions, which are possessed by the princes of the

As these were very common, if not, perhaps, the universal notions of the times, the two first princes of the house of STUART were the more excusable for their mistake. And RAPIN, suitable to his usual malignity and partiality, seems to treat them with too much severity, upon account of it.



HANOVER line, and which, it might be supposed, would engage us in the intrigues and wars of the continent, and lose us, in some measure, the inestimable advantage we possess of being surrounded and guarded by the sea, which we command. The disadvantages of recalling the abdicated family consist chiefly in their religion, which is more prejudicial to society than that established among us, is contrary to it, and affords no toleration, or peace, or security to any other religion.

It appears to me, that all these advantages and disadvantages are allowed on both sides; at least, by every one who is at all susceptible of argument or reasoning. No subject, however loyal, pretends to deny, that the disputed title and foreign dominions of the present royal family are a loss. Nor is there any partizan of the STUART family, but will confess, that the claim of hereditary, indefeasible right, and the Roman Catholic religion, are also disadvantages in that family. It belongs, therefore, to a philosopher alone, who is of neither party, to put all these circumstances in the scale, and assign to each of them its proper poise and influence. Such an one will readily, at first, acknowledge, that all political questions are infinitely complicated, and that there scarce ever occurs, in any deliberation, a choice, which is either purely good, or purely ill. Consequences, mixed and varied, may be foreseen to flow from every measure: And many consequences, unforeseen, do always, in fact, result from it. Hesitation, and reserve, and suspense, are therefore the only sentiments he brings to this essay or trial. Or if he indulges any passion, 'tis that of derision and ridicule against the ignorant multitude, who are always clamorous and dogmatical, even in the nicest questions,

tions, of which, from want of temper, perhaps still more than of understanding, they are altogether unfit judges.

But to say something more determinate on this head, the following reflections will, I hope, show the temper, if not the understanding of a philosopher.

Were we to judge merely by first appearances, and by past experience, we must allow that the advantages of a parliamentary title in the house of HANOVER are much greater than those of an undisputed hereditary title in the house of STUART; and that our fathers acted wisely in preferring the former to the latter. So long as the house of STUART reigned in BRITAIN, which, with some interruption, was above 80 years, the government was kept in a continual fever, by the contentions between the privileges of the people and the prerogatives of the crown. If arms were dropt, the noise of disputes continued; or if these were silenced, jealousy still corroded the heart, and threw the nation into an unnatural ferment and disorder. And while we were thus occupied in domestic contentions, a foreign power, dangerous, if not fatal, to public liberty, erected itself in EUROPE, without any opposition from us, and even sometimes with our assistance.

But during these last sixty years, when a parliamentary establishment has taken place; whatever factions may have prevailed either among the people or in public assemblies, the whole force of our constitution has always fallen to one side, and an uninterrupted harmony has been preserved between our princes and our parliaments. Public liberty, with internal peace and order, has flourished almost without interruption: Trade and manufactures, and agriculture, have increased:

The arts, and sciences, and philosophy, have been cultivated. Even religious parties have been necessitated to lay aside their mutual rancour : And the glory of the nation has spread itself all over EUROPE ; while we stand the bulwark against oppression, and the great antagonist of that power which threatens every people with conquest and subjection. So long and so glorious a period no nation almost can boast of : Nor is there another instance in the whole history of mankind, that so many millions of people have, during such a space of time, been held together, in a manner so free, so rational, and so suitable to the dignity of human nature.

But though this recent instance seems clearly to decide in favour of the present establishment, there are some circumstances to be thrown into the other scale ; and 'tis dangerous to regulate our judgment by one event or example.

We have had two rebellions during the flourishing period above mentioned, besides plots and conspiracies without number. And if none of these have produced any very fatal event, we may ascribe our escape chiefly to the narrow genius of those princes who disputed our establishment ; and may esteem ourselves so far fortunate. But the claims of the banished family, I fear, are not yet antiquated ; and who can foretel, that their future attempts will produce no greater disorder ?

The disputes between privilege and prerogative may easily be composed by laws, and votes, and conferences, and concessions ; where there is tolerable temper or prudence on both sides, or on either side. Among contending titles, the ques-  
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tion can only be determined by the sword, and by devastation, and by civil war.

A prince who fills the throne with a disputed title, dares not arm his subjects; the only method of securing a people fully, both against domestic oppression and foreign conquest.

Notwithstanding all our riches and renown, what a critical escape did we lately make from dangers, which were owing not so much to bad conduct and ill success in war, as to the pernicious practice of mortgaging our finances, and the still more pernicious maxim of never paying off our incumbrances? Such fatal measures could never have been embraced, had it not been to secure a precarious establishment\*.

But to convince us, that an hereditary title is to be embraced rather than a parliamentary one, which is not supported by any other views or motives; a man needs only transport himself back to the æra of the restoration, and suppose, that he had had a seat in that parliament which recalled the royal family, and put a period to the greatest disorders that ever arose from the opposite pretensions of prince and people. What would have been thought of one, that had proposed, at that time, to set aside CHARLES II. and settle the crown on the Duke of YORK or GLOUCESTER, merely in order to exclude all high claims, like those of their father and grandfather? Would not such an one have been regarded as a very extravagant projector, who loved dangerous remedies, and

\* Those who consider how universal this pernicious practice of funding has become all over EUROPE, may perhaps dispute this last opinion. But we lay under less necessity than other states.

could tamper and play with a government and national constitution, like a quack with a sickly patient?

The advantages which result from a parliamentary title, preferably to an hereditary one, though they are great, are too refined ever to enter into the conception of the vulgar. The bulk of mankind would never allow them to be sufficient for committing what would be regarded as an injustice to the prince. They must be supported by some gross, popular, and familiar topics; and wise men, though convinced of their force, would reject them, in compliance with the weakness and prejudices of the people. An incroaching tyrant or deluded bigot alone, by his misconduct, is able to enrage the nation, and render practicable what was always perhaps desirable.

In reality, the reason assigned by the nation for excluding the race of STUART, and so many other branches of the royal family, is not on account of their hereditary title (which, however just in itself, would, to vulgar apprehensions, have appeared altogether absurd) but on account of their religion. Which leads us to compare the disadvantages above mentioned of each establishment.

I confess, that, considering the matter in general, it were much to be wished, that our prince had no foreign dominions, and could confine all his attention to the government of this island. For not to mention some real inconveniencies that may result from territories on the continent, they afford such a handle for calumny and defamation, as is greedily seized by the people, who are always disposed to think ill of their superiors.

riors. It must, however, be acknowledged, that HANOVER is, perhaps, the spot of ground in EUROPE the least inconvenient for a King of BRITAIN. It lies in the heart of GERMANY, at a distance from the great powers, which are our natural rivals: It is protected by the laws of the empire, as well as by the arms of its own sovereign, and it serves only to connect us more closely with the house of AUSTRIA, which is our natural ally.

In the last war, it has been of service to us, by furnishing us with a considerable body of auxiliary troops, the bravest and most faithful in the world. The Elector of HANOVER is the only considerable prince in the empire, who has pursued no separate end, and has raised up no state pretensions, during the late commotions of EUROPE; but has acted, all along, with the dignity of a King of BRITAIN. And ever since the accession of that family, it would be difficult to show any harm we have ever received from the electoral dominions, except that short disgust in 1718, with CHARLES XII. who, regulating himself by maxims very different from those of other princes, made a personal quarrel of every public injury\*.

The religious persuasion of the house of STUART is an inconvenience of a much deeper dye, and would threaten us with much more dismal consequences. The Roman Catholic religion, with its huge train of priests and friars, is vastly more expensive than ours: Even though unaccompanied with its natural attendants of inquisitors, and stakes, and gibbets, it is less tolerating: And not contented with dividing the sacerdotal from the regal office (which must be prejudicial to any

\* This was published in the year 1752.



state) it bestows the former on a foreigner, who has always a separate, and may often have an opposite interest to that of the public.

But were this religion ever so advantageous to society, it is contrary to that which is established among us, and which is likely to keep possession, for a long time, of the minds of the people. And though it is much to be hoped, that the progress of reason and philosophy will, by degrees, abate the virulent acrimony of opposite religions all over EUROPE; yet the spirit of moderation has, as yet, made too slow advances to be entirely trusted. The conduct of the SAXON family, where the same person can be a Catholic King and Protestant Elector, is, perhaps, the first instance, in modern times, of so reasonable and prudent a behaviour. And the gradual progress of the Catholic superstition does, even there, prognosticate a speedy alteration: After which, 'tis justly to be apprehended, that persecution will put a speedy period to the Protestant religion in the place of its nativity.

Thus, upon the whole, the advantages of the settlement in the family of STUART, which frees us from a disputed title, seem to bear some proportion with those of the settlement in the family of HANOVER, which frees us from the claims of prerogative: But at the same time, its disadvantages, by placing on the throne a Roman Catholic, are much greater than those of the other establishment, in settling the crown on a foreign prince. What party an impartial patriot, in the reign of K. WILLIAM or Q. ANNE, would have chosen amidst these opposite views, may, perhaps, to some appear hard to determine. For my part, I esteem liberty so invaluable a blessing  
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in society, that whatever favours its progress and security, can scarce be too fondly cherished by every one who is a lover of human kind.

But the settlement in the house of HANOVER has actually taken place. The princes of that family, without intrigue, without cabal, without solicitation on their part, have been called to mount our throne, by the united voice of the whole legislative body. They have, since their accession, displayed in all their actions, the utmost mildness, equity, and regard to the laws and constitution. Our own ministers, our own parliaments, ourselves have governed us; and if aught ill has befallen us, we can only blame fortune or ourselves. What a reproach must we become among nations, if, disgusted with a settlement so deliberately made, and whose conditions have been so religiously observed, we should throw every thing again into confusion; and by our levity and rebellious disposition, prove ourselves totally unfit for any state but that of absolute slavery and subjection?

The greatest inconvenience attending a disputed title, is, that it brings us in danger of civil wars and rebellions. What wise man, to avoid this inconvenience, would run directly upon a civil war and rebellion? Not to mention, that so long possession, secured by so many laws, must, ere this time, in the apprehension of a great part of the nation, have begot a title in the house of HANOVER, independent of their present possession: So that now we should not, even by a revolution, obtain the end of avoiding a disputed title.

No revolution made by national forces, will ever be able, without some other great necessity, to abolish our debts and incumbrances; in which the interest of so many persons is concerned. And a revolution made by foreign forces is a conquest: A calamity with which the precarious balance of power threatens us, and which our civil dissensions are likely, above all other circumstances, to bring upon us.



## E S S A Y XVI.

## IDEA OF A PERFECT COMMONWEALTH.

OF all mankind there are none so pernicious as political projectors, if they have power; nor so ridiculous, if they want it: As, on the other hand, a wise politician is the most beneficial character in nature, if accompanied with authority; and the most innocent, and not altogether useless, even if deprived of it. 'Tis not with forms of government, as with other artificial contrivances; where an old engine may be rejected, if we can discover another more accurate and commodious, or where trials may safely be made, even though the success be doubtful. An established government has an infinite advantage, by that very circumstance of its being established; the bulk of mankind being governed by authority, not reason, and never attributing authority to any thing that has not the recommendation of antiquity. To tamper, therefore, in this affair, or try projects merely upon the credit of supposed argument and philosophy, can never be the part of a wise magistrate, who will bear a reverence to what carries the marks of age; and though he may attempt some improvements for the public good, yet will he adjust his innovations, as much as possible, to the antient fabric, and preserve intire the chief pillars and supports of the constitution.

The mathematicians in EUROPE have been much divided concerning that figure of a ship, which is the most commodious for sailing; and HUYGENS, who at last determined this controversy, is justly thought to have obliged the learned, as well as commercial world; though COLUMBUS had failed to AMERICA, and Sir FRANCIS DRAKE made the tour of the world, without any such discovery. As one form of government must be allowed more perfect than another, independent of the manners and humours of particular men; why may we not inquire what is the most perfect of all, though the common botched and inaccurate governments seem to serve the purposes of society, and though it be not so easy to establish a new government, as to build a vessel upon a new plan? The subject is surely the most worthy curiosity of any the wit of man can possibly devise. And who knows, if this controversy were fixed by the universal consent of the learned, but, in some future age, an opportunity might be afforded of reducing the theory to practice, either by a dissolution of the old governments, or the combination of men to form a new one, in some distant part of the world? In all cases, it must be advantageous to know what is most perfect in the kind, that we may be able to bring any real constitution or form of government as near it as possible, by such gentle alterations and innovations as may not give too great disturbance to society.

All I pretend to in the present essay is to revive this subject of speculation; and therefore I shall deliver my sentiments in as few words as possible. A long dissertation on that head would not, I apprehend, be very acceptable to the public, who will be apt to regard such disquisitions both as useless and chimerical.

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All plans of government, which suppose great reformation in the manners of mankind, are plainly imaginary. Of this nature, are the *Republic* of PLATO, and the *Utopia* of Sir THOMAS MORE. The OCEANA is the only valuable model of a commonwealth, that has as yet been offered to the public.

The chief defects of the OCEANA seem to be these. *First*, Its rotation is inconvenient, by throwing men, of whatever ability, by intervals, out of public employment. *Secondly*, Its *Agrarian* is impracticable. Men will soon learn the art, which was practised in antient ROME, of concealing their possessions under other people's names; till at last, the abuse will become so common, that they will throw off even the appearance of restraint. *Thirdly*, The OCEANA provides not a sufficient security for liberty, or the redress of grievances. The senate must propose, and the people consent; by which means, the senate have not only a negative upon the people, but, what is of infinitely greater consequence, their negative goes before the votes of the people. Were the King's negative of the same nature in the ENGLISH constitution, and could he prevent any bill from coming into parliament, he would be an absolute monarch. As his negative follows the votes of the houses, it is of little consequence: Such a difference is there in the manner of placing the same thing. When a popular bill has been debated in the two houses, is brought to maturity, all its conveniencies and inconveniencies weighed and balanced; if afterwards it be presented for the royal assent, few princes will venture to reject the unanimous desire of the people. But could the King crush a disagreeable bill in embryo (as was the case, for some time, in the SCOTS parliament, by means



means of the lords of the articles) the BRITISH government would have no balance, nor would grievances ever be redressed: And 'tis certain, that exorbitant power proceeds not, in any government, from new laws, so much as from neglecting to remedy the abuses which frequently rise from the old ones. A government, says MACHIAVEL, must often be brought back to its original principles. It appears then, that in the OCEANA the whole legislature may be said to rest in the senate; which HARRINGTON would own to be an inconvenient form of government, especially after the *Agrarian* is abolished.

Here is a form of government, to which I cannot, in theory, discover any considerable objection,

Let GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND, or any territory of equal extent, be divided into a 100 counties, and each county into a 100 parishes, making in all 10,000. If the country purposed to be erected into a commonwealth, be of more narrow extent, we may diminish the number of counties; but never bring them below thirty. If it be of greater extent, it were better to enlarge the parishes, or throw more parishes into a county, than increase the number of counties,

Let all the freeholders of ten pounds a-year in the country, and all the house-holders worth 200 pounds in the town-parishes, meet annually in the parish church, and chuse, by ballot, some freeholder of the county for their member, whom we shall call the county *representative*.

Let the 100 county representatives, two days after their election, meet in the county-town, and chuse by ballot, from  
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their own body, ten county *magistrates*, and one *senator*. There are, therefore, in the whole commonwealth, 100 senators, 1100 county magistrates, and 10,000 county representatives. For we shall bestow on all senators the authority of county magistrates, and on all county magistrates the authority of county representatives.

Let the senators meet in the capital, and be endowed with the whole executive power of the commonwealth; the power of peace and war, of giving orders to generals, admirals, and ambassadors, and, in short, all the prerogatives of a BRITISH King, except his negative.

Let the county representatives meet in their particular counties, and possess the whole legislative power of the commonwealth; the greatest number of counties deciding the question; and where these are equal, let the senate have the casting vote.

Every new law must first be debated in the senate; and tho' rejected by it, if ten senators insist and protest, it must be sent down to the counties. The senate may join to the copy of the law, their reasons for receiving or rejecting it.

Because it would be troublesome to assemble all the county representatives for every trivial law, that may be requisite, the senate have their choice of sending down the law either to the county magistrates or county representatives.

The magistrates, though the law be referred to them, may, if they please, call the representatives, and submit the affair to their determination.

Whether the law be referred by the senate to the county magistrates or representatives, a copy of it, and of the senate's reasons, must be sent to every representative eight days before the day appointed for the assembling, in order to deliberate concerning it. And though the determination be, by the senate, referred to the magistrates, if five representatives of the county order the magistrates to assemble the whole court of representatives, and submit the affair to their determination, they must obey.

Either the county magistrates or representatives may give, to the senator of the county, the copy of a law to be proposed to the senate; and if five counties concur in the same order, the law, though refused by the senate, must come either to the county magistrates or representatives, as is contained in the order of the five counties.

Any twenty counties, by a vote either of their magistrates or representatives, may throw any man out of all public offices for a year. Thirty counties for three years,

The senate has a power of throwing out any member or number of members of its own body, not to be re-elected for that year. The senate cannot throw out twice in a year the senator of the same county.

The power of the old senate continues for three weeks after the annual election of the county representatives. Then all the new senators are shut up in a conclave, like the cardinals; and by an intricate ballot, such as that of VENICE or MALTA, they chuse the following magistrates; a protector, who represents the dignity of the commonwealth, and presides in  
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the senate; two secretaries of state; these six councils, a council of state, a council of religion and learning, a council of trade, a council of laws, a council of war, a council of the admiralty, each council consisting of five persons; together with six commissioners of the treasury and a first commissioner. All these must be senators. The senate also names all the ambassadors to foreign courts, who may either be senators or not.

The senate may continue any or all of these, but must re-elect them every year.

The protector and two secretaries have session and suffrage in the council of state. The business of that council is all foreign politics. The council of state has session and suffrage in all the other councils.

The council of religion and learning inspects the universities and clergy. That of trade inspects every thing that may affect commerce. That of laws inspects all the abuses of laws by the inferior magistrates, and examines what improvements may be made of the municipal law. That of war inspects the militia and its discipline, magazines, stores, &c. and when the republic is in war, examines into the proper orders for generals. The council of admiralty has the same power with regard to the navy, together with the nomination of the captains and all inferior officers.

None of these councils can give orders themselves, except where they receive such powers from the senate. In other cases, they must communicate every thing to the senate.

When the senate is under adjournment, any of the councils may assemble it before the day appointed for its meeting.

Besides these councils or courts, there is another called the court of *competitors*; which is thus constituted. If any candidates for the office of senator have more votes than a third of the representatives, that candidate, who has most votes, next to the senator elected, becomes incapable for one year of all public offices, even of being a magistrate or representative: But he takes his seat in the court of competitors. Here then is a court which may sometimes consist of a hundred members, sometimes have no members at all; and by that means, be for a year abolished.

The court of competitors has no power in the commonwealth. It has only the inspection of public accounts, and the accusing any man before the senate. If the senate acquit him, the court of competitors may, if they please, appeal to the people, either magistrates or representatives. Upon that appeal, the magistrates or representatives meet at the day appointed by the court of competitors, and chuse in each county three persons; from which number every senator is excluded. These to the number of 300 meet in the capital, and bring the person accused to a new trial.

The court of competitors may propose any law to the senate; and if refused, may appeal to the people; that is, to the magistrates or representatives, who examine it in their counties. Every senator, who is thrown out of the senate by a vote of the court, takes his seat in the court of competitors.

The senate possesses all the judicative authority of the house of Lords, that is, all the appeals from the inferior courts. It likewise nominates the Lord Chancellor, and all the officers of the law.

Every

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Every county is a kind of republic within itself, and the representatives may make county-laws; which have no authority 'till three months after they are voted. A copy of the law is sent to the senate, and to every other county. The senate, or any single county, may, at any time, annul any law of another county.

The representatives have all the authority of the BRITISH justices of peace in trials, commitments, &c.

The magistrates have the nomination of all the officers of the revenue in each county. All causes with regard to the revenue are appealed ultimately to the magistrates. They pass the accompts of all the officers; but must have all their own accompts examined and passed at the end of the year by the representatives.

The magistrates name rectors or ministers to all the parishes.

The Presbyterian government is established; and the highest ecclesiastical court is an assembly or synod of all the Presbyters of the county. The magistrates may take any cause from this court, and determine it themselves.

The magistrates may try, and depose or suspend any presbyter.

The militia is established in imitation of that of SWISSERLAND, which being well known, we shall not insist upon it. It will only be proper to make this addition, that an army of 20,000 men be annually drawn out by rotation, paid and encamped during six weeks in summer; that the duty of a camp may not be altogether unknown.



The magistrates nominate all the colonels and downwards. The senate all upwards. During war, the general nominates the colonel and downwards, and his commission is good for a twelvemonth. But after that, it must be confirmed by the magistrates of the county, to which the regiment belongs. The magistrates may break any officer in the county regiment. And the senate may do the same to any officer in the service. If the magistrates do not think proper to confirm the general's choice, they may nominate another officer in the place of him they reject.

All crimes are tried within the county by the magistrates and a jury. But the senate can stop any trial, and bring it before themselves.

Any county may indict any man before the senate, for any crime.

The protector, the two secretaries, the council of state, with any five more that the senate appoints, on extraordinary emergencies, are possessed of *dictatorial* power for six months.

The protector may pardon any person condemned by the inferior courts.

In time of war, no officer of the army that is in the field, can have any civil office in the commonwealth.

The capital, which we shall call LONDON, may be allowed four members in the senate. It may therefore be divided into four counties. The representatives of each of these chuse one senator, and ten magistrates. There are therefore in the city four senators, forty-four magistrates, and four hundred

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representatives. The magistrates have the same authority as in the counties. The representatives also have the same authority; but they never meet in one general court: They give their votes in their particular county, or division of hundreds.

When they enact any city-law, the greatest number of counties or divisions determines the matter. And where these are equal, the magistrates have the casting vote.

The magistrates chuse the mayor, sheriff, recorder, and other officers of the city.

In the commonwealth, no representative, magistrate, or senator, as such, has any salary. The protector, secretaries, councils, and ambassadors, have salaries.

The first year in every century is set apart to correct all inequalities, which time may have produced in the representative. This must be done by the legislature.

The following political aphorisms may explain the reason of these orders.

The lower sort of people and small proprietors are good enough judges of one not very distant from them in rank or habitation; and therefore, in their parochial meetings, will probably chuse the best, or nearly the best representative: But they are wholly unfit for county-meetings, and for electing into the higher offices of the republic. Their ignorance gives the grandees an opportunity of deceiving them.

Ten thousand, even though they were not annually elected, are a large enough basis for any free government. 'Tis true,  
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the nobles in POLAND are more than 10,000, and yet these oppress the people. But as power continues there always in the same persons and families, this makes them, in a manner, a different nation from the people. Besides, the nobles are there united under a few heads of families.

All free governments must consist of two councils, a less and a greater, or, in other words, of a senate and people. The people, as HARRINGTON observes, would want wisdom, without the senate: The senate, without the people, would want honesty.

A large assembly of 1000, for instance, to represent the people, if allowed to debate, would fall into disorder. If not allowed to debate, the senate has a negative upon them, and the worst kind of negative, that before resolution.

Here therefore is an inconvenience, which no government has yet fully remedied, but which is the easiest to be remedied in the world. If the people debate, all is confusion: If they do not debate, they can only resolve; and then the senate only carves for them. Divide the people into many separate bodies; and then they may debate with safety, and every inconvenience seems to be prevented.

Cardinal de RETZ says, that all numerous assemblies, however composed, are mere mob, and swayed in their debates by the least motive. This we find confirmed by daily experience. When an absurdity strikes a member, he conveys it to his neighbour, and so on, till the whole be infected. Separate this great body; and though every member be only of middling sense, 'tis not probable, that any thing but reason can prevail



prevail over the whole. Influence and example being removed, good sense will always get the better of bad among a number of people. Good sense is one thing: But follies are numberless; and every man has a different one. The only way of making a people wise, is to keep them from uniting into large assemblies.

There are two things to be guarded against in every *senate*: Its combination, and its division. Its combination is most dangerous. And against this inconvenience we have provided the following remedies. 1. The great dependence of the senators on the people by annual election; and that not by an undistinguishing rabble, like the ENGLISH electors, but by men of fortune and education. 2. The small power they are allowed. They have few offices to dispose of. Almost all are given by the magistrates in the counties. 3. The court of competitors, which being composed of men that are their rivals, next to them in interest, and uneasy in their present situation, will be sure to take all advantages against them.

The division of the senate is prevented, 1. By the smallness of their number. 2. As faction supposes a combination to a separate interest, it is prevented by their dependence on the people. 3. They have a power of expelling any factious member. 'Tis true, when another member of the same spirit comes from the county, they have no power of expelling him: Nor is it fit they should; for that shows the humour to be in the people, and probably arises from some ill conduct in public affairs. 4. Almost any man, in a senate so regularly chosen by the people, may be supposed fit for any civil office. It would

would be proper, therefore, for the senate to form some *general* resolutions with regard to the disposing of offices among the members : which resolutions would not confine them in critical times, when extraordinary parts on the one hand, or extraordinary stupidity on the other, appears in any senator ; but yet they would be sufficient to prevent bribe and faction, by making the disposal of the offices a thing of course. For instance, let it be a resolution, That no man shall enjoy any office, till he has sat four years in the senate : That, except ambassadors, no man shall be in office two years following : That no man shall attain the higher offices but through the lower : That no man shall be protector twice, &c. The senate of VENICE govern themselves by such resolutions.

In foreign politics the interest of the senate can scarce ever be divided from that of the people ; and therefore 'tis fit to make the senate absolute with regard to them ; otherwise there could be no secrecy nor refined policy. Besides, without money no alliance can be executed ; and the senate is still sufficiently dependant. Not to mention, that the legislative power being always superior to the executive, the magistrates or representatives may interpose, whenever they think proper.

The chief support of the BRITISH government is the opposition of interests ; but that, though in the main serviceable, breeds endless factions. In the foregoing plan, it does all the good without any of the harm. The *competitors* have no power of controlling the senate ; they have only the power of accusing, and appealing to the people.

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'Tis necessary, likewise, to prevent both combination and division in the thousand magistrates. This is done sufficiently by the separation of places and interests.

But lest that should not be enough, their dependence on the 10,000 for their elections, serves to the same purpose.

Nor is that all: For the 10,000 may resume the power whenever they please; and not only when they all please, but when any five of a hundred please, which will happen upon the very first suspicion of a separate interest.

The 10,000 are too large a body either to unite or divide, except when they meet in one place, and fall under the guidance of ambitious leaders. Not to mention their annual election, by the whole body of the people, that are of any consideration.

A small commonwealth is the happiest government in the world within itself, because every thing lies under the eye of the rulers: But it may be subdued by great force from without. This scheme seems to have all the advantages both of a great and a little commonwealth.

Every county-law may be annulled either by the senate or another county; because that shows an opposition of interest: In which case no part ought to decide for itself. The matter must be referred to the whole, which will best determine what agrees with general interest.

As to the clergy and militia, the reasons of these orders are obvious. Without the dependence of the clergy on the



civil magistrates, and without a militia, 'tis folly to think any free government will ever have security or stability.

In many governments, the inferior magistrates have no rewards but what arise from their ambition, vanity, or public spirit. The salaries of the FRENCH judges amount not to the interest of the sums they pay for their offices. The DUTCH burgo-masters have little more immediate profit than the ENGLISH justices of peace, or the members of the house of commons formerly. But lest any should suspect, that this would beget negligence in the administration, (which is little to be feared, considering the natural ambition of mankind) let the magistrates have competent salaries. The senators have access to so many honourable and lucrative offices, that their attendance needs not be bought. There is little attendance required of the representatives.

That the foregoing plan of government is practicable, no one can doubt, who considers the resemblance it bears to the commonwealth of the United Provinces, formerly one of the wisest and most renowned governments in the world. The alterations in the present scheme are all evidently to the better.

1. The representation is more equal.
2. The unlimited power of the burgo-masters in the towns, which forms a perfect aristocracy in the DUTCH commonwealth, is corrected by a well-tempered democracy, in giving to the people the annual election of the county representatives.
3. The negative, which every province and town has upon the whole body of the DUTCH republic, with regard to alliances, peace and war, and the imposition of taxes, is here removed.
4. The counties, in the present plan, are not so independent of each other,

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nor do they form separate bodies so much as the seven provinces; where the jealousy and envy of the smaller provinces and towns against the greater, particularly HOLLAND and AMSTERDAM, have frequently disturbed the government. 5. Larger powers, though of the safest kind, are intrusted to the senate than the States-General possess; by which means, the former may become more expeditious, and secret in their resolutions, than 'tis possible for the latter.

The chief alterations that could be made on the BRITISH government, in order to bring it to the most perfect model of limited monarchy, seem to be the following. *First*, The plan of the republican parliament ought to be restored, by making the representation equal, and by allowing none to vote in the county elections who possess not a property of 200 pounds value. *Secondly*, As such a house of Commons would be too weighty for a frail house of Lords, like the present, the Bishops and SCOTS Peers ought to be removed, whose behaviour, *in former parliaments*, destroyed entirely the authority of that house: The number of the upper house ought to be raised to three or four hundred: Their seats not hereditary, but during life: They ought to have the election of their own members; and no commoner should be allowed to refuse a seat that was offered him. By this means, the house of Lords would consist entirely of the men of chief credit, ability, and interest of the nation; and every turbulent leader in the house of Commons might be taken off, and connected in interest with the house of Peers. Such an aristocracy would be an excellent barrier both to the monarchy and against it. At present, the balance of our government depends in some measure on the ability and behaviour of the sovereign; which are variable and uncertain circumstances.

I allow, that this plan of limited monarchy, however corrected, is still liable to three great inconveniencies. *First*, It removes not entirely, though it may soften, the parties of *court* and *country*. *Secondly*, The King's personal character must still have a great influence on the government. *Thirdly*, The sword is in the hands of a single person, who will always neglect to discipline the militia, in order to have a pretence for keeping up a standing army. 'Tis evident, that this is a mortal distemper in the BRITISH government, of which it must at last inevitably perish. I must, however, confess, that SWEDEN seems, in some measure, to have remedied this inconvenience, and to have a militia, with its limited monarchy, as well as a standing army, which is less dangerous than the BRITISH.

We shall conclude this subject with observing the falshood of the common opinion, that no large state, such as FRANCE or BRITAIN, could ever be modelled into a commonwealth, but that such a form of government can only take place in a city or small territory. The contrary seems evident. Though 'tis more difficult to form a republican government in an extensive country than in a city; there is more facility, when once it is formed, of preserving it steady and uniform, without tumult and faction. 'Tis not easy, for the distant parts of a large state to combine in any plan of free government; but they easily conspire in the esteem and reverence for a single person, who, by means of this popular favour, may seize the power, and forcing the more obstinate to submit, may establish a monarchical government. On the other hand, a city readily concurs in the same notions of government, the natural equality of property favours liberty, and the nearness of habitation enables



enables the citizens mutually to assist each other. Even under absolute princes, the subordinate government of cities is commonly republican; while that of counties and provinces is monarchical. But these same circumstances, which facilitate the erection of commonwealths in cities, render their constitution more frail and uncertain. Democracies are turbulent. For however the people may be separated or divided into small parties, either in their votes or elections; their near habitation in a city will always make the force of popular tides and currents very sensible. Aristocracies are better adapted for peace and order, and accordingly were most admired by antient writers; but they are jealous and oppressive. In a large government, which is modelled with masterly skill, there is compass and room enough to refine the democracy, from the lower people, who may be admitted into the first elections or first concoction of the commonwealth, to the higher magistrates, who direct all the movements. At the same time, the parts are so distant and remote, that 'tis very difficult, either by intrigue, prejudice, or passion, to hurry them into any measures against the public interest.

'Tis needless to inquire, whether such a government would be immortal. I allow the justness of the poet's exclamation on the endless projects of human race, *Man and for ever!* The world itself probably is not immortal. Such consuming plagues may arise as would leave even a perfect government a weak prey to its neighbours. We know not to what lengths enthusiasm, or other extraordinary motions of the human mind, may transport men, to the neglect of all order and public good. Where difference of interest is removed, whimsical and unaccountable

countable factions often arise, from personal favour or enmity. Perhaps rust may grow to the springs of the most accurate political machine, and disorder its motions. Lastly, extensive conquests, when pursued, must be the ruin of every free government; and of the more perfect governments sooner than of the imperfect; because of the very advantages which the former possess above the latter. And though such a state ought to establish a fundamental law against conquests; yet republics have ambition as well as individuals, and present interest makes men forgetful of their posterity. 'Tis a sufficient incitement to human endeavours, that such a government would flourish for many ages; without pretending to bestow on any work of man, that immortality, which the Almighty seems to have refused to his own productions.



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